

Birmingham, page 14
Practice, page 15
Fanfare for
the common
fan at Bath

Wednesday March 11 1998

Abu Dhabi D 5.50
Albania D 5.50
Algeria D 5.50
Andorra D 5.50
Austria D 5.50
Belarus D 5.50
Belgium D 5.50
Bosnia D 5.50
Bulgaria D 5.50
Canada D 5.50
Croatia D 5.50
Cyprus D 5.50
Denmark D 5.50
Estonia D 5.50
Finland D 5.50
France D 5.50
Germany D 5.50
Greece D 5.50
Hungary D 5.50
Iceland D 5.50
Israel D 5.50
Italy D 5.50
Japan D 5.50
Korea D 5.50
Kuwait D 5.50
Latvia D 5.50
Lithuania D 5.50
Luxembourg D 5.50
Malta D 5.50
Moldova D 5.50
Netherlands D 5.50
Norway D 5.50
Oman D 5.50
Pakistan D 5.50
Poland D 5.50
Portugal D 5.50
Qatar D 5.50
Romania D 5.50
Saudi Arabia D 5.50
Slovakia D 5.50
Slovenia D 5.50
Spain D 5.50
Sweden D 5.50
Switzerland D 5.50
Thailand D 5.50
Turkey D 5.50
Ukraine D 5.50
USA D 5.50

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Where the grass really is greener

Are drugs taking over the countryside?

G2 with today's television

The changing face of fatherhood

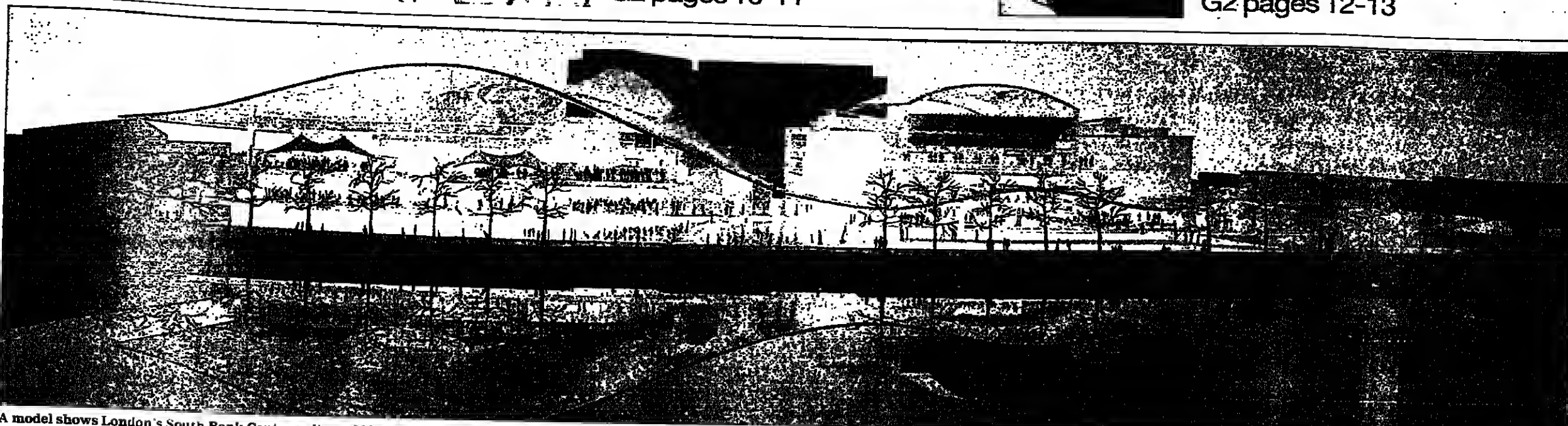
Why unmarried dads matter too

G2 pages 10-11

Society

Beating crime in Newcastle

G2 pages 12-13



A model shows London's South Bank Centre as it would have looked if the 'glass wave' project had gone ahead. The plan was mired in politics and confusion before being finally rejected by the Arts Council. PHOTOGRAPH: EAMONN MAHONEY

South Bank 'glass wave' scrapped

Dan Glaister
Arts Correspondent

THE £135 million Richard Rogers scheme to redevelop the South Bank Centre in London, which would have covered one of the largest arts complexes in the world in a "glass wave", has been scrapped.

The Arts Council, which was being asked to contribute £75 million in lottery money, is understood to have turned

down the scheme. It would have been the council's biggest lottery grant since it awarded £75 million to the Royal Opera House.

It is likely that the Arts Council's decision was influenced by Gerry Robinson, who is due to replace Lord Gowrie as chairman in May.

The first casualty is the South Bank Centre chairman, Sir Brian Corby, who was asked to stand down at a meeting last Friday. He is to be replaced by property tycoon Elliott Bernard, chair-

man of the South Bank Centre Foundation, the complex's fundraising arm. It is understood that Mr Bernard's appointment was approved at a meeting with Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary. The Arts Council, the freeholder for the South Bank Centre, was not consulted.

Mr Bernard, chairman of the property company Chelsea, which he founded in 1986, is known outside property circles for his friendship with David Mellor at the time of the then minister's affair

with Antonia de Sancha. Mr Mellor and Mr Bernard met through the London Philharmonic Orchestra, where they were both trustees. They were also both involved with Chelsea football club.

Mr Bernard lent Mr Mellor a flat in Mayfair that was the venue for his trysts with Ms de Sancha, and he also provided a chauffeur-driven car for the Tory minister. The acceptance of these gifts provided ammunition for Mr Mellor's critics. Previously, Mr Bernard had been called

as a prosecution witness in the first Guinness trial. The political fallout could also affect Lord Rogers. Following criticism of his design for the Millennium Dome, Lord Rogers has in turn criticised the project's leadership under Peter Mandelson. A year ago the darling of New Labour, the recently ennobled architect's star may now be waning.

The future of Nicholas Snowman, South Bank Centre chief executive, is also in question. Strongly rumoured

to have applied for other arts jobs, Mr Snowman has in the past been tipped to be held responsible should the scheme be rejected.

The bid has been the subject of confusion and indecision since it was first submitted to the Arts Council in December 1995. Initially valued at £171 million, the project was subsequently reduced to £151 million.

Late last year further cuts were made to the proposals, bringing the total cost down

Child Support Agency in chaos

Families suffer as thousands of cases ignored

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

CHILDREN being cared for by a lone parent could be going short of more than £1,000 a year because the Child Support Agency has abandoned attempts to recover a backlog of debt and to rectify hundreds of thousands of wrong financial assessments.

"Many thousands of people will suffer hardship and distress at a difficult time in

their lives," an all-party committee of MPs concluded. David Davis, the committee's Conservative chairman, added: "The agency is failing the children and families the child support system was designed to protect."

The CSA's inefficiency was lambasted by the Commons Public Accounts Committee, which pointed to the "immense task now facing the agency in dealing with the legacy of error, backlog of work and accumulated debt."

Given the agency's past record, MPs did not believe it could succeed in the task.

The standard of service provided by the agency was unacceptable in a modern society, the committee's report said. "It is frankly appalling that errors in assessments are left unchecked and that the process for new assessments is riddled with confusion and delay," Mr Davis added.

"It is little comfort to someone on the bad end of sloppy administration that in 62 per cent of cases the agency got it right. No citizen should have to suffer from the mistakes of public bodies."

The MPs attacked the CSA's decision not to put past errors right, but instead "to let hundreds of thousands of incorrect assessments hang fire until individual cases rise to the surface of attention or come up for periodic review."

The committee was not convinced this would properly tackle the issue.

The CSA had a backlog of 572,000 cases waiting to be assessed at the end of March 1997, over half of which were



'Thousands of people will suffer hardship and distress at a difficult time in their lives'

Public Accounts Committee

more than a year old and 155,000 of which had been deferred in December 1994.

"We are seriously concerned at the financial impact of these delays and the hardship caused to children and parents, and we find it unacceptable that these backlogs

will not be cleared until March 1999," the MPs said. Outstanding debt by absent parents totalled over £1.1 billion, of which £669 million — more than 70 per cent — may not be collectable.

The MPs were "deeply concerned" that two out of five

receipts in 1996-97, and five out of six debt balances at March 31 1997, were wrong, many by more than £1,000. They urged action to "tackle this legacy of error quickly and comprehensively", possibly via a dedicated task force.

MPs were also unimpressed with the agency's handling of new cases. "The current accuracy target of 65 per cent for new cases provides an unacceptable standard of service in a modern society. It means that one in six assessments, almost 80,000 cases, will be wrong."

MPs pointed out that the agency was predicting a 60 per cent increase in cases by March 2000 while its resources were cut by 10 per cent.

Faith Boardman, chief executive of the agency, told MPs: "I think we are reasonably confident that we can achieve what is being set for us."

But the MPs said: "On the record so far, we do not believe that they can succeed."

They called for the agency

to cancel its new computer system until the situation had stabilised. "If you put garbage in, you will get garbage out," said Mr Davis.

Reacting to the committee's findings was strong David Rendel, Liberal Democrat social security spokesman, said: "The Liberal Democrat campaign for the abolition of the CSA has been completely vindicated by the Public Accounts Committee report. The CSA is beyond repair and should be scrapped."

The agency had promised a revolution in its practices, including scrapping interviews in local offices and opting for

a seven-days-a-week telephone service. Many of the agency's 3,000 local-office staff will lose their jobs if they fail to transfer to one of six regional centres. The changes will also involve Benefits Agency staff taking over from next month the job of interviewing lone parents about child maintenance — in their homes — when they claim social security.

The changes will mean a huge reorganisation with many local offices closing and the transfer of CSA headquarters from Dudley in the West Midlands to Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Soothing, arresting: classical music for headbangers

John Ezzard

TURKISH security chiefs yesterday unveiled a four-point scheme to calm their notoriously head-banging riot police.

Point one is plastic instead of wooden truncheons. Point two is plastic rather than steel handcuffs. Point three is radio transceivers so that they can be ordered to stop hitting demonstrators.

But the most fiendish item in the plan is point four. Soothing Western classical music — especially Mozart and Beethoven — will be played to them as they wait behind the scenes in riot coaches.

The aim is to stop them getting twitchy and paranoid. Ankara's assistant police chief, Kutlay Celik,

said: "The music will have a soothing effect on the brains of those who are not so polite."

Clashes with Islamists, trade unionists and Kurdish demonstrators have given crack anti-riot units — known until now as Steel Force — a somewhat impolite reputation.

Western human rights monitors have criticised Turkey's way of handling dissent. But the last straw came when police began beating up their fellow civil servants.

"Extremist factions in the demonstrations tease the police and then escape," said Orhan Tung, councillor at the Turkish embassy in London. "Law-abiding civil servants who are demonstrating are the ones who get hit."

While Turks like Western

as well as their own classical music, the initiative is expected to broaden the taste of some Steel Force members. The chart topper in Turkey's cities last week was Turkish, who specialises in soft-drug music.

The government is also aware of a potential hitch: the martial vigour of Turkish janissary (infantry) music has been a major influence on Western classics since the 18th century.

Composers who have used it include Haydn, Gluck and Bartok. Heavy strains of it are present in Mozart's Die Entführung aus dem Serail and the finale of Beethoven's ninth symphony.

"We shall have to be careful what we play," Mr Tung said. "Not Beethoven's Turkish March — and definitely no Wagner."



Turkish police put their new classical training into practice

Blair says Prescott allegations are all lies

JOHN Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday won the full support of Tony Blair in his fight to dispel allegations that he and his son, Jonathan, had acted improperly over the sale of government-owned homes in Hull.

Through his spokesman Alistair Campbell, Mr Blair categorically denounced the claims as a lie. "I don't honestly believe anybody remotely thinks John Prescott is the kind of guy who would get up to the kind of things being suggested," Mr Campbell said.

Mr Prescott yesterday publicly accused his critics in his Hull constituency of waging a vendetta against him and his family.

Squabbles get out of hand, page 3

Inside

Britain

German prosecutors demanded that Ross McKelvey face trial in Britain after they moved to extradite her failed.

4

World News

There was outrage amid the mourning as ethnic Albanians tried to identify relatives killed in the police crackdown in Kosovo.

6

Finance

Shell, the oil giant, is to publish a social responsibility report defending its human rights record around the world.

12

Sport

Rangers have agreed to sell England midfielder Paul Gascoigne to Crystal Palace for £20m. The player still has to agree to the move.

14

Crossword 16

Comment 5; Obituaries 10
Quick Crossword 16
Radio 16; TV 16



since 19

That's how your money has grown if you invested in our Growth PEP at launch. To invest this tax year, hurry, the deadline is April 5.

direct

0345 900 900

Open seven days a week, from 8am to 10pm

Virgin Direct Personal Financial Service Ltd is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority. The price of units and any income from them can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount you invested. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The tax status of PEPs will be subject to statutory change after 6.4.99. You can invest in a Virgin PEP until April '99 when we'll be able to transfer your PEP to the new ISA free of charge. Calls are recorded and monitored. *Source: Micropal, single investment, £3.95 to 23.29p, offer to bid price basis, gross income reinvested.

2 NEWS

Sketch

Words written on the wind



Simon Hoggart

SPENT a weekend in Vienna last week, where you stroll in that lovely city there are vast buildings designed to administer the mightiest empire in Europe. Now these great piles are home to huddles of civil servants managing the affairs of a small, land-locked country, whose concerns are safely ignored by almost everyone else on the planet.

I am reminded of Vienna when I attend foreign affairs questions in the Commons. Some MPs are aware of our straitened circumstances in the world, but others aren't, and still speak as if nations trembled at a word of rebuke from a British foreign secretary.

Oddly enough, some of these are Tories, who perhaps subconsciously yearn for the days when gunboats were despatched and men in astrakhan collared coats climbed down the steps of Imperial Airways aeroplanes before announcing their decision to international conferences.

We still can't see a pie without wanting to stick our thumbs in it. Yesterday MPs tabled questions about, or raised on the floor, these countries: Bosnia, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, Turkey, Poland, Albania, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Algeria, Libya, South Korea, Mexico and Zambia. Some others too.

In all these places Britain was urged to press for action, or protest about something, or take urgent steps, or inform the government of the gravity of the position.

The United States was mentioned once or twice too, but it was clear from the context that we expect to take orders from them, rather than pass instructions in their direction.

For example, ministers were asked about Mexico. Tony Lloyd criticised the mas-

saques in that country and hoped that those who had committed such outrages would be brought to book.

Helen Jones, who had asked the question, then suggested that one of the best ways of protecting individual rights was through independent trade unions. What plans had the Government to assist the Mexican trade unions?

The correct answer to the question is something on these lines: "Look, we're all in the same boat, but there is nothing, nothing, whatever that we can do to help them beyond the vaguest expressions of goodwill."

"There are approximately one million other causes more urgent to us, and none of them is going to get much help either, if any."

"Trade unions the length of Britain can pass resolutions and hold whip-rounds in support of Mexican trade unions, if they wish. It will help to fill the otherwise empty hours in which they will not be invited for talks in Downing Street. But as for me and my colleagues, forget it."

Instead Mr Lloyd leapt up like an eager puppy invited for a game involving rubber bones. "I met with Mexican trade unions when I went to Mexico, and I had long and interesting conversations with them about the future of free trade unions."

Do they have similar questions in the Mexican legislature? "Will my honourable amigo tell us what he intends to do to support British trade unions, who have been ground under the jackboot of the heartless so-called Labour government which has remained deaf to their plight?"

Or in Zambia? "Will the minister take up the issue of the outrageous treatment meted out to deposed leader John Major, who now has to go everywhere by bus?"

Of course we do have a role in the Gulf crisis, and we do at the moment hold the presidency of the European Union, so there are a few places where what we think matters, if only a little.

But for the most part our words are written on the wind. As Robin Cook ruefully noted, when back in 1991 we noisily urged the Iraqis to rise against their leader, we abandoned them all and left them to be murdered.

Chief Inspector depicts prison system in chaos, with mental illness rife and youths needlessly held

Drug barons 'control jails'

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

BRITISH prisons are controlled by drug barons, packed with the mentally ill and in chaos, according to the man charged with inspecting them.

In an astonishingly candid assessment, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons yesterday told MPs that as many as 10 drug dealers per prison were operating with immunity and using enforcers to collect their debts.

Sir David Ramsbotham's claims, in evidence to the home affairs select committee, came as the Home Sec-

etary, Jack Straw, was addressing prison governors on the need to tackle young offenders early. Sir David's comments are a sign of his increasing frustration as prison numbers soar: last Friday there were 64,999 inmates compared with 48,794 four years ago.

Sir David was giving evidence to the committee on alternatives to prison when he described the crisis facing the prison system. He said the system was "chaotic" and claimed that drug dealers held sway unchallenged in many jails.

"If the prison staff claim they don't know who they are, I don't actually believe them, because all the prisoners know. It is easy to find out and if the staff don't know, they jolly well should know," he said.

He suggested that 30-40 per cent of young offenders need not be in prison at all.

He estimated 20,000 inmates — almost a third of the prison population — suffered from some form of mental illness which could not be properly treated in jail.

Foreign nationals were a "hideous drain" on the service and should be sent back to serve sentences in their own countries.

Asked whether some prison staff still held strong right-wing views, Sir David said: "I could still introduce you to people you saw on the TV programme *Portridge*."

He focused on drugs as the highest problem. "The people who cause the misery are the drug barons, whom people know about. I would like to see them taken out. They intimidate others, they drive people into debt, they dominate the life of the prisoners in a way which I think is totally unacceptable."

Drug debts presented a serious problem, he said. Even if a prisoner was moved to another institution, someone would "deal" with him. "Hideous pressure" was put on prisoners' families to bring in drugs.

"I would like to see passive drug dogs [sniffer dogs] in every prison, passive drug dogs on duty every time visitors come into prison. I would like to see them used on prisoners' landings at night when the stuff is being smoked." He stressed that the prison service was trying hard in difficult circumstances.

Mr Straw was in Buxton in Derbyshire at the Prison Governors' Association's conference. The association's chairman, Chris Scott, told him that the prison system was in crisis and the Government should issue new sentencing guidelines so that jail was used only as a last resort.

"If the Government gave this lead, it would signal as clearly as possible to every one that imprisonment on the

scale we have at the moment is a failure," said Mr Scott.

Mr Straw accepted that drugs were a serious issue but said great efforts, including random testing, were being made to combat them. He defended the Government's strategy on criminal justice: "Ensuring stricter punishment for serious repeat offenders, as we promised in our manifesto, is very far from saying that prison is the best or only response to all instances of offending."

Mr Straw faces a delicate balancing act with prison service personnel telling him that the jails cannot cope while senior police officers tell him that prison is a highly effective deterrent.

scale we have at the moment is a failure," said Mr Scott.

Mr Straw accepted that drugs were a serious issue but said great efforts, including random testing, were being made to combat them. He defended the Government's strategy on criminal justice: "Ensuring stricter punishment for serious repeat offenders, as we promised in our manifesto, is very far from saying that prison is the best or only response to all instances of offending."

Mr Straw faces a delicate balancing act with prison service personnel telling him that the jails cannot cope while senior police officers tell him that prison is a highly effective deterrent.

Numeracy and literacy standards 'a scandal'

Vivek Chaudhary
Education Correspondent

MANY adults, particularly those living in urban areas, are not literate or numerate, according to a survey by the Basic Skills Agency, which showed that almost one in six adults in England and Wales had poor literacy and numeracy skills.

The findings of the survey, published yesterday, showed that almost one in six adults in England and Wales had poor literacy and numeracy skills.

Other areas which featured in the top ten of poor literacy skills yesterday are Southwark, south London, and Newham and Hackney, east London. Liverpool, Corby and Leicester registered among the top ten of areas afflicted by low levels of numeracy.

Respondents taking part in the literacy part of the survey were asked to complete tasks such as reading a short note, a recipe or a medicine bottle, looking for numbers in a telephone directory, and spelling words such as "apply" and "writing".

For numeracy they were asked to work out change from a shopping trip, count stock, work out test times and select the best bank for a loan.

Alan Wells, director of the agency, said that results from the survey could help local authorities to increase levels of literacy and numeracy in their areas.

He said the results did not show the effectiveness of local education authorities in areas that came out badly, because many of the people surveyed had been educated in different parts of the country.

so the estimates are on the conservative side."

Organisers of the survey said yesterday that they had taken into account the number of people not fluent in English in areas such as Tower Hamlets and other urban areas, and only those who were educated in English schools were allowed to take part in the survey.

The findings of the survey, published yesterday, showed that almost one in six adults in England and Wales had poor literacy and numeracy skills.

Other areas which featured in the top ten of poor literacy skills yesterday are Southwark, south London, and Newham and Hackney, east London. Liverpool, Corby and Leicester registered among the top ten of areas afflicted by low levels of numeracy.

Respondents taking part in the literacy part of the survey were asked to complete tasks such as reading a short note, a recipe or a medicine bottle, looking for numbers in a telephone directory, and spelling words such as "apply" and "writing".

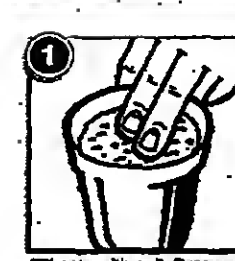
For numeracy they were asked to work out change from a shopping trip, count stock, work out test times and select the best bank for a loan.

Alan Wells, director of the agency, said that results from the survey could help local authorities to increase levels of literacy and numeracy in their areas.

He said the results did not show the effectiveness of local education authorities in areas that came out badly, because many of the people surveyed had been educated in different parts of the country.

Some of the questions...

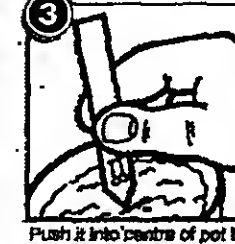
Literacy



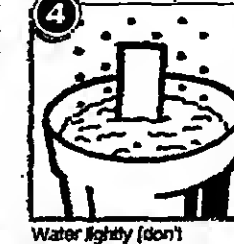
1 Fill pots with soil. Press soil down until it feels firm.



2 Tear off your seed stick.



3 Push it into centre of pot to line marked. Lightly press down soil.



4 Water lightly (don't over-water).



5 Put in warm and light space.



6 Pinch out the weakest seedlings to allow strongest to grow on.

Please look at the instructions on this sheet about the planting of seeds. I will then ask you some questions.

a) When you fill the pot with soil what should the soil feel like after you have pressed it down?

- 1 Firm
- 2 Other
- 3 Don't know
- 4 Refused

b) Which seedling should be allowed to continue to grow?

- 1 The strongest seedling
- 2 1.56. Please give me the change you owe me. (Respondent given the two £1 coins)
- 3 Don't know
- 4 Refused

Numeracy



A loaf of bread 68p each

Two tins of soup 45p each

Have ready the following coins: 2 x £1 coins, 1 x 50p, 2 x 20p, 2 x 5p, 2 x 2p, 2 x 1p

You have offered to do some shopping for me.

a) You have bought a loaf of bread and two tins of soup. How much money do I owe you?

- 1 £1.58
- 2 Other
- 3 Don't know
- 4 Refused

Respondents are given all of the money except 2 x £1 coins

b) Here is £2 to cover some shopping that cost £1.56. Please give me the change you owe me. (Respondent given the two £1 coins)

Change given is...

- 1 42p
- 2 Other
- 3 Don't know
- 4 Refused

...and how they did

Literacy

Percentage of sample failing competence threshold

Worst Ten authorities with the worst literacy performance:

Tower Hamlets	24.4	Hart	8.0
Knowsley	22.9	Wokingham	9.1
Newham	21.8	South Cambridgeshire	9.8
Barking and Dagenham	21.6	Ultrasford	9.7
Hackney	21.5	Surrey Heath	9.7
Leicester	21.0	South Bucks	9.7
Southwark	20.9	Tandridge	9.8
Corby	20.8	Nide Valley	9.8
Sandwell	20.7	Waverley	9.8
Liverpool	20.6	Chilren	9.9

Best Ten authorities with the best literacy performance:

Knowsley	47.5	Richmond upon Thames	23.6
Barking and Dagenham	45.5	Hart	23.9
Corby	45.2	Wokingham	24.3
Sandwell	44.6	City of London	24.3
Leicester	44.2	Ultrasford	24.6
Easington	44.0	Elmbridge	24.8
Liverpool	43.4	Tandridge	24.9
Tower Hamlets	42.9	Waverley	25.9
Hull	42.7	South Bucks	25.0
Halton	42.6	South Cambridgeshire	25.0

Numeracy

Percentage of sample failing competence threshold

Worst Ten authorities with the worst numeracy performance:

Knowsley	47.5	Richmond upon Thames	23.6
Barking and Dagenham	45.5	Hart	23.9
Corby	45.2	Wokingham	24.3
Sandwell	44.6	City of London	24.3
Leicester	44.2	Ultrasford	24.6
Easington	44.0	Elmbridge	24.8
Liverpool	43.4	Tandridge	24.9
Tower Hamlets	42.9	Waverley	25.9
Hull	42.7	South Bucks	25.0
Halton	42.6	South Cambridgeshire	25.0

Best Ten authorities with the best numeracy performance:

Knowsley	47.5	Richmond upon Thames	23.6
Barking and Dagenham	45.5	Hart	23.9
Corby	45.2	Wokingham	24.3
Sandwell	44.6	City of London	24.3
Leicester	44.2	Ultrasford	24.6
Easington	44.0	Elmbridge	24.8
Liverpool	43.4	Tandridge	24.9
Tower Hamlets	42.9	Waverley	25.9
Hull	42.7	South Bucks	25.0
Halton	42.6	South Cambridgeshire	25.0

Review

Seduction game is a family affair

Eddie Gibb

Mate In Three
Tron Theatre, Glasgow

THE Tron's ambition to be first to the punch with contemporary European plays has once again paid off, with the UK premiere of Vittorio Franceschi's dark comedy. It has travelled well.

Franceschi worked with Dario Fo in Italy in the late 1980s and they formed the Nuova Scena company to produce political cabaret.

Though more personal than political, *Mate In Three*, first performed in 1991, has the same uncomfortably vicious wit for which Fo is known.

The title, taken from chess, alludes to a game in which two men play to seduce a woman — to take the queen. Valerio (John Beto) is a middle-aged shopkeeper who figures he has one last shot at finding a wife left in him. Although modestly successful in business, and still with his own hair and teeth, a big obstacle stands in the way of seduction: his brother.

Antonio (Andy Gray) has regressed into infantile spontaneity, which leads him to act out every impulse that springs into his head. He is in turns witty, sulky, infuriating and endearing, but there is never a moment's peace with this demanding baby around.

We learn that Antonio's mental illness stemmed from the loss of his beloved fiancée in a car crash. Valerio was the driver, which adds a seasonal of recrimination to their love-hate relationship.

To manage Antonio's mania, Valerio has taken to

playing the roles of their absent parents: he wears a wig to signify a mother's indulgence, while the appearance of father's hat means a tongue lashing. This dressing-up game is not easily explained to non-players, and one of the central themes is how an outsider can upset the balance of a close relationship. Another is whether a man is happier if he controls, or is controlled by, his emotions.

Despite the family baggage, Valerio becomes engaged to Marianna (Fiona Bell), whom he introduces to Antonio with understandable trepidation. The effect is worse than he could have imagined — they hit it off — and Valerio becomes sidelined in a relationship of teenage intensity.

There are many good things about this production, not least Christopher Cruise's translation. But what *Mate In Three* requires is for Antonio to be as charismatic as he is badly behaved. Andy Gray, a Scottish theatre and television regular, pulls off a brilliant comic performance that draws laughs from the audience and the American tradition of cracking wise.

The early scenes between the brothers show perfectly the bleak humour of two men whose lives have turned into a bizarre ritual which has echoes of Beckett's tramps in Godot. The crackling tension slackens slightly with the appearance of Marianna, and there is perhaps a little too much dashing about towards the end, when stillness is needed to appreciate the full tragedy of the characters' predicament. Overall, though, this is a very impressive production of a brilliant play.

Times price war evidence sought

Simon Beavis
and Chris Barrie

THE pressure on Rupert Murdoch's News International escalated dramatically last night when the Office of Fair Trading announced it was seeking more information about allegations that the Times newspaper has been engaging in predatory pricing.

John Bridgeman, Director General of Fair Trading, yesterday wrote to three rival broadsheets — the Guardian, Independent and Daily Telegraph — requesting evidence to back up their claims that the Times has been sold at below cost to wipe out competition.

In an unexpected twist, he also demanded information on the Sunday newspaper market, indicating that he may widen the scope of a future inquiry.

Mr Bridgeman's intervention follows a meeting with executives from rival newspapers at which they presented evidence that the Times has been sold at below cost during an intense price war that has rocked the British newspaper market for the last four years.

Although it does not represent the official precursor of a full scale inquiry by the Office of Fair Trading, letters sent out yesterday show that the issue is being taken seriously by the competition authorities.

In his letter, Mr Bridgeman

said he would welcome "any evidence of an intention by the Times to eliminate a competitor". If the evidence proves compelling, Mr Bridgeman has the power to refer the matter to the Monopolies Commission for full investigation.

There have been three inquiries into pricing practices of the Times — in 1996, 1994 and 1993 — but on each occasion no evidence of predatory pricing was proven.

The issue has come to the fore following a campaign in the Lords to introduce a specific clause into the Competition Bill, currently going through Parliament, to cover the issue of newspaper predatory pricing.

Proposed by Liberal Democrat Lord McNally and supported by Lord Borrie, the former director general of fair trading, was passed in the upper chamber in defiance of government whips.

Last night News International, the UK subsidiary of Mr Murdoch's News Corp, said it had not been engaged in predatory pricing according to guidelines laid down by the OFT. It would provide information if asked.

Last night, Bob Phillips, chief executive of the Guardian Media Group, said: "We note that the Director General of the OFT is investigating the question of newspaper pricing. We will be giving careful and detailed consideration to his requests for information, and will be responding in due course."

South Bank 'glass wave' scrapped

continued from page 1

£20 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards restoration of the existing buildings in the South Bank complex — the Royal Festival Hall, the Hayward Gallery, the Purcell Room and the Queen Elizabeth II Hall — and an improvement of the area surrounding the buildings. As well as landscaping, the whole complex would have been covered by a dramatic glass canopy designed by the Richard Rogers Partnership.

The rest of the funding was to come from several sources:

£20 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards restoration of the existing buildings in the South Bank complex — the Royal Festival Hall, the Hayward Gallery, the Purcell Room and the Queen Elizabeth II Hall — and an improvement of the area surrounding the buildings. As well as landscaping, the whole complex would have been covered by a dramatic glass canopy designed by the Richard Rogers Partnership.

The rest of the funding was to come from several sources:

Following the outcry over the lottery grant to the Royal Opera House, and further awards to projects in London, it became increasingly likely that the Arts Council would find it politically difficult to approve the mammoth South Bank scheme, and late last year it imposed a ceiling of £50 million on individual projects.

Nevertheless the Arts Council professed its support for the South Bank proposal, describing it as "visionary", and passed it to the Department of Culture.

Mr Smith, a supporter of the scheme, returned the application to the Arts Council, arguing that it would have to decide whether to fund the scheme at the expense of other initiatives.

The rejection of the scheme is likely to fuel criticism of the Millennium Dome at Greenwich. While the dome is receiving £450 million of lottery money, the South Bank Centre — based around the Royal Festival Hall, the legacy from the 1951 Festival of Britain — is decaying for want of £75 million.

Defiant hotelier challenges legality of meat on the bone ban

Lawrence Donegan

THE ban on sales of beef on the bone faces legal challenge after a hotelier's lawyers yesterday won the right to a preliminary hearing into the legality of the regulation.

James Sutherland, the first person in Britain to be prosecuted under the ban, and the owner of The Lodge Hotel in the

Scottish border town of Carfraemill, has been accused under the Beef Bones Regulations of serving "roast beef", while attached to the bone" on December 22 — six days after the Government's ban was imposed. The meal, billed as the "prohibition dinner", was widely publicised and attended by 170 people. If convicted, he could face a £5,000 fine and six months' jail.

Mr Sutherland's lawyers



hair dress
sapper
with a po

hair thro
outy PM tur
his critics

Easter Cruise & Train Deluxe

Cruise the near Mediterranean from Genoa calling at Ajaccio (Corsica), Villefranche for the Riviera and Livorno for Elba and return via the Nostalgic Orient Express across the Alps to Lake Lucerne

Fly on 8th April to Genoa and board the Swiss-managed MS Switzerland to make a 4-night Easter cruise calling at Ajaccio on Corsica, with time to explore the rugged beauty of this little visited island, Villefranche for the Riviera and an optional visit to Monaco, and Livorno for the lovely town itself and an optional visit to the island of Elba. Returning to Genoa we then travel by road to Lake Maggiore and join the Nostalgic Orient Express for a journey across the Alps to Lucerne for either one or two nights in our hotel before returning to London via Zurich.

6 days from £445 from 9th April 1998

DEPARTURE DATE & PRICES

per person twin cabin and one night in hotel Lucerne

9th April 1998

Run-of-the-Ship Tariffs: Inside cabin £445
Lower Deck outside cabin £545
Middle Deck & Upper Deck outside cabin £645
Junior Suite £845

Single add 40%. Extra night in Lucerne £50

Includes: return air travel, cruise on full board, breakfast in Lucerne, port taxes, P&O/Port of Call, Rail included, travel insurance, transfers, baggage handling, our current Conditions of Travel (

control jails

150



Roger Tomkins arriving at the BSE inquiry yesterday

'Have you heard of CJD?' That was the moment when the light began to go out

BSE inquiry hears of victim's plight. Owen Bowcott reports



Clare Tomkins, who has nvCJD despite being a vegetarian

CLARE Tomkins enjoyed life to the full, loved animals, was looking forward to getting married and had been a strict vegetarian since the age of 13. But over the course of six months, she degenerated into a tormented patient racked by spasmodic head movements, whose hands and feet turned inward. She could not walk unaided, covered in fear from members of her family and "howled like a sick, injured animal".

Yesterday her father, Roger Tomkins, described in harrowing detail the agonies endured by his terminally ill daughter and the effect her wasting condition is having on the family's life.

Relatives of other victims wept as the BSE inquiry listened in hushed silence to Mr Tomkins, an engineering company director, recall how

distress, broke off their engagement but later restored it when he realised the extent of her devastation.

The following year her ability to walk began to suffer and she started falling over and complaining of dizziness. "She complained of a numbness in her legs. She began to complain of double vision. She also complained of pains in her knees."

"Her memory was beginning to fail, so that she could not

remember events that occurred only hours before. My wife and I also noticed that Clare began to make unusual facial expressions."

Clare's handwriting, which had been large and flamboyant, was first reduced to a quarter of its normal size and later became an indecipherable scrawl.

She was treated with antidepressants by her GP but became childlike in her reactions, and developed a

nervous laugh. She appeared continually anxious, breathing heavily and was unsteady on her feet.

"We were always optimistic. We always felt there was going to be a light at the end of the tunnel," Mr Tomkins told the inquiry. She was admitted as an inpatient to a private clinic. There her therapy involved not seeing her parents for two weeks, but her condition deteriorated rapidly and the psychiatrist

soon doubted his diagnosis that she was suffering from acute anxiety.

Treatment at several hospitals, involving being sectioned under the Mental Health Act and electroconvulsive therapy, followed before she was referred to St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, London.

Finally in August 1997, after a biopsy test on her tonsils, doctors confirmed that she was suffering from a

"prion encephalopathy". Mr Tomkins told the inquiry: "I asked what that was. 'Have you heard of CJD?', the doctor replied. That was the moment when the theoretical light at the end of the tunnel began to close down."

Although a vegetarian, Clare had eaten sausages and burgers as a young child and had also worked with pet feed in her job.

"You go through a process of bereavement," Mr Tom-

kins said. "Imagining everything without her but then I can go upstairs and hold and cuddle her but, some day, I know I will no longer be able to do that."

"When alone I too, cry because of my feelings of sheer frustration and despair; frustration because I cannot do anything to help my daughter recover from her illness and despair because I know that Clare will in time succumb to an untimely death."

Vet tells of pressure by MAFF to hide link to scrapie

A VETERINARY surgeon who submitted the first published research on bovine spongiform encephalopathy described yesterday how he was forced by the Ministry of Agriculture to alter a conference presentation.

Colin Whitaker had investigated an outbreak of

the previously undiagnosed syndrome in cattle at High Helden, Kent. In a joint paper, with Carl Johnson, a local Ministry of Agriculture veterinary investigation officer, Mr Whitaker described the disease as a "new scrapie-like syndrome". Scrapie affects the brain of sheep and induces a fatal disease.

Mr Whitaker told the BSE inquiry in London yesterday that before he presented his findings at a conference of the British Cattle Veterinary Association in Nottingham on July 8, 1987, a senior MAFF official had insisted that the words "scrapie-like" were removed from one of his slides.

He said: "Carl Johnson came to me and said, 'look, we've been asked not to use this'. We discussed it at length and I was reluctant to cross it out, but in the end in deference to Carl Johnson, who had given me a great deal of help, I agreed. He was reluctant to do the same but obviously he was acting under orders."

The wording was changed to read "new syndrome" instead of "new scrapie-like syndrome". Asked whether he had ever come across such instructions before, Mr Whitaker told the inquiry that it was the only time he could remember the Ministry of Agriculture interfering with a piece of research in this way.

Stars rock Cool Britannia claims

Blair dream disappears with a pop

Dan Gilaister Arts Correspondent

THINGS Can Only Get Better, went the D-Ream song used as New Labour's theme during last year's election campaign. Now Natalie Imbruglia's hit single Big Mistake might better sum up the feelings of the pop world for the Labour government.

A survey of some of the leading names in pop for the New Musical Express reveals a high level of discontent and disillusionment.

Jarvis Cocker of Pulp says it would have been better had the Tories won the election while Tim Burgess of the Charlatans argues that New Labour is determined to prove to the City that it can be "as mean as the last lot". The Verve, whose Urban Hymns won most 1997 "album of the year" polls, urge the Government to provide free rehearsal or studio time for young musicians. Creation Records boss Alan McGee, a member of the Government's music industry task force, says a lot of what Labour is doing, although well intentioned, is making things worse.

An unsigned editorial in the NME says: "Rock music's decades-old, instinctive and deep-seated pro-Labour sympathies have, in the past nine months, been chipped away almost to nothing. Good morning, Mr Blair, this is your wake-up call."

It goes on to criticise the Cool Britannia image. "Our music, our culture, the collective sweat of our groovy

brows has been bundled up and neatly repackaged and given a cute little brand name and is being used by New Labour spin doctors to give this hideously reactionary New Labour government a cachet of radical credibility."

The criticisms focus on four key areas of government policy: welfare to work, university tuition fees, curfew for under-18s, and drugs decriminalisation. Musicians were asked if they had ever been on the dole, would they have survived without it, did they see any difference between the present government and the last Tory one, what should Labour be doing to help young people, and should pop stars go in parties at No 10.

In answer to the last question, Bobby Gillespie of Primal Scream says: "Only with 10th of cent sex or a nail bomb."

The Cast's John Power argues that musicians should be allowed time on the dole. "The new situation will make it harder for the great song-writing type who likes to sit on his arse, smoke dope, and daydream. And at the end of the day that's an art in itself."

But the harshest criticism comes from McGee, who donated £50,000 to Labour before the election. "They're worse than the last government," he says of the welfare-to-work initiatives.

"On one hand, you've got Tony Blair and Chris Smith making this thing about Cool Britannia, but on the other hand they're taking away the means for the next generation of artists and musicians to go away and create."



Dissenting voices, from the left... Neil Hannon, Tim Burgess, Cerys Matthews, Jarvis Cocker, Asian Dnb Foundation, Ian Broudie

'I'd like to say it's too early to tell, but there doesn't seem a great deal of difference [between Labour and Tory policies]'

Tim Burgess Charlatans

'Policies are still ultimately about appeasing those most likely to vote them back in next time'

Asian Dub Foundation

'Different colour. More parties at No 10'

Cerys Matthews Catatonia

'I don't think it's enough. I just think it's the same company, but there's a different bloke in charge of the board'

Ian Broudie Lightning Seeds

'It's worse than if the Tories got in, in a way, because with the Tories you would expect the same old shit to happen'

Jarvis Cocker Pulp

'Government is government. Always stuck in the middle of opposing views, always trying to compromise'

Neil Hannon Divine Comedy

Blair throws his weight behind Prescott and son

Deputy PM turns on his critics

David Hencke and Peter Hetherington

TONY Blair yesterday put his full support behind John Prescott and his son, Jonathan, who had acted improperly over the sale of Government-owned homes in Hull were "a lie".

The Prime Minister's press secretary, Alastair Campbell, intervened as Mr Prescott claimed he was a victim of a

vendetta against him and his family which included break-ins and the theft of old computer files to try to prove they were involved in a "dodgy" housing deal in Hull.

It came as a Government audit inquiry began into the sale of 26 homes — said to be worth more than £500,000 — for just £108,000 by the Department of Environment-funded North Hull Housing Action Trust to Wyke Developments, which employs Jonathan as contracts manager for the scheme. Mr Campbell condemned al-

legations that Mr Prescott and his son were "up to no good" over the deal. "I don't honestly believe anybody remotely thinks John Prescott is the kind of guy who would get up to the kind of things being suggested."

Mr Prescott himself took the extraordinary step of publicly accusing his critics in his Hull constituency of waging an "unacceptable" vendetta. Humberside Police confirmed that they were aware that "various individuals" had levelled allegations against him.

The Deputy Prime Minister last night received strong support from fellow Hull Labour MP, Kevin McNamara, whose constituency covers the housing trust. "As far as I am concerned, and I have talked directly with the housing trust, any inquiry will clear Jonathan from any dealings with this sale. The housing trust have said that he was not involved in any of the negotiations over the sale but

that both the Department of Environment's regional and national offices were made aware that Mr Prescott's son worked for the company."

Earlier Mr Prescott had highlighted actions against him including break-ins at his house in which things were stolen, and thefts from his Hull constituency of financial statements. He said: "These things I can tend to laugh at — but your family get very much affected by it and it grows on you."

When the thefts from bins first came to light Mr Prescott appeared relaxed. "Being a good Environment Minister, I put all my papers in the bin... there must have been some details from the bank thrown out with them."

He had been approached about the theft by his bank manager who in turn had been contacted by a man claiming to be a journalist. Suspicions were aroused and the police, who had already been alerted to a break-in at Mr Prescott's

garage last May, launched an investigation. But they uncovered nothing.

Soon several organisations and individuals were contacted by a man called Stephen, claiming to work as an investigator chasing "hidden assets" for solicitors and others. Stephen, said to work for Research Systems, had Jonathan Prescott, son of the deputy prime minister, in his sights. He had gained access to details of a deal involving the sale of 26 former council houses at knockdown prices of £5,000 each to Wyke Property Services, in which Jonathan Prescott owns a 20 per cent stake.

Matters remained quiet for several weeks until the last city council meeting when a Labour dissident, Tony Fee, publicly raised the issue of the contentious sale and asked the council leader, Pat Doyle, in call for a Department of the Environment investigation. Mr Doyle declined the request.

Acknowledging yesterday that he had been fed the information by the "asset chasers", Mr Fee, a former dockworker, said the whole controversy could have been avoided, keeping Prescott senior in the background, if only an investigation had begun earlier.

But sadly that isn't the way things go in Hull," he said.

Like other Labour dissidents in the city, such as former Humberside county council leader Terry Gernaghty, Mr Fee is no friend of Prescott senior. But did the dissidents seek out the investigators, as some of their critics have claimed — or did the "asset chasers", who openly admit breaking the law, place the information in their way?

In truth, the so-called investigators, who have privately boasted of making "big money" from bringing down a deputy prime minister, appear to have targeted several rebels to expose the housing deal.

Mr Prescott has borne the brunt of some criticism from the dissidents, unfairly say

his supporters, because of his long-standing friendship with the principal power broker on the city council, John Black, long-serving chairman of the housing committee and a former lord mayor.

During his tenure, Mr Black was held up as a shining example as the man who stitched together deals with private developers to improve housing in the city. Although nine years Mr Prescott's junior, the friendship goes back over 20 years; Mr Black and his wife Margaret used to baby-sit for the Prescotts.

But as complaints about bullying and intimidation in the city grew, some — unfairly — pointed the finger at Mr Prescott for protecting his friend. Actually, the deputy party leader was so busy campaigning around the country that political squabbles in Hull probably eluded him.

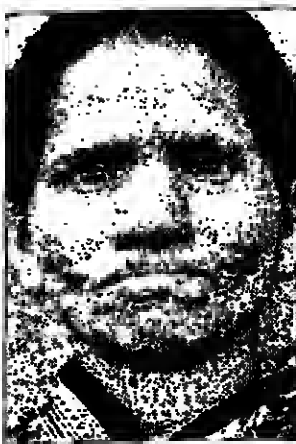
But after election matters got out of hand, Black was allegedly involved in a fracas at a victory party in a

cricket club. The new MP for Hull West, Alan Johnson, was so concerned he reported the matter to Labour's National Executive. Black was suspended from holding office in the party. Soon a police file on £42,000 in civic hospitality he claimed when he was lord mayor was sent to the Crown Prosecution Service.

By last October, Mr Black was suspended from the Labour group, while the local district party was also suspended. He spoke of a hate campaign, claimed he was the victim of a vendetta, and, associates claim, went personally to visit John Prescott at his house to plead for help. The Deputy Prime Minister, it seems, was careful not to offer any promises.

Mr Prescott, in short, has been drawn into a classic municipal wrangle, the hallmark of many Labour councils where the party has been in power so long that it has become arrogant rather than corrupt.

£5 million a year to give away



Moriamnessa before she was treated for leprosy

How a gift from the fund will help to transform the lives of leprosy sufferers



Moriamnessa in November 1996 after her therapy

MORIAMNESSA'S husband, Motih Mia, died of leprosy in 1994 leaving her and her seven children to cope on their own, writes Emily Sheffield. The family from the Sylhet region of north-east Bangladesh then had to cope with Moriamnessa and five of the children also suffering leprosy.

Caused by a bacillus which damages tendons and nerves under the skin, the disease, if untreated, causes loss of feeling in hands and feet. The bone softens and fingers and toes become deformed, stumps. Large nodules grow on the skin and blindness follows. Although easily treatable with multidrug therapy (MDT), 90 per cent of leprosy cases are in developing countries where treatment is scarce and the disease is considered a curse by Allah.

There are more than 500,000 new cases of leprosy every year and 4 million people already suffer from it or are threatened with leprosy disability.

In 1990 Princess Diana became a patron of the Leprosy Mission, an international Christian charity that has helped care for and cure more than 200,000 people with leprosy. Her visits to patients generated attention and helped raise funds.

Moriamnessa and her family were among those who, through help from the mission, were cured. Although Moriamnessa remains severely disfigured, the disease has been halted and her children are unscathed.

The £5 million donation from the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, will enable the mission to establish a health education centre near Delhi which will encourage sufferers to seek treatment before they become disabled.



The princess examining a patient at a leprosy hospital in Nepal. She became a patron of the Leprosy Mission in 1990

Diana's fund fails to satisfy all

Rory Carroll

THE Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund is unlikely to give away enough money to make it one of the top 20 grant-making trusts, despite claims that it will transform the charity landscape.

Projections suggest that after yesterday's initial one-off payouts, the fund's annual grants will total about £5 million. That would place it 24th in the Charities Aid Founda-

tion list of grant-making trusts, just behind the Variety Club Children's Charity and 10 places behind the Prince's Trust.

The first grants are worth £13 million. Future grants will be made from the income of the fund, the capital of which is expected to reach £100 million. For the fund to continue indefinitely, as is intended, annual grants will be limited to a small proportion of that.

The foundation said that 5 per cent was considered a safe return on investment, giving

the Diana fund £5 million to distribute each year.

Yesterday Vivienne Parry, one of its trustees, said: "I think the fund will become the most important grant-giving body in the country, and a lifeline to an enormous number of charities."

In 1995 the Wellcome Trust gave grants worth £218.8 million, followed by the National Lottery Charities Board (£158 million), the British Academy (£22.5 million), the Royal Society (£21.3 million) and the Garfield Weston Foundation (£19 million).

The Diana fund could become one of the most important grant-giving bodies only by using up its capital, which would run out within 10 years and betray its remit to keep the princess's name alive.

Alternatively, it could hit the big league if contributions continued pouring in, but there is a belief that they had probably levelled off.

A spokeswoman for the fund said £40 million was in the bank and another £50 million was due later this year, including the money from Edon John's single, Candle in

the Wind. Reaction to the first round of grants was mixed. Eight causes will share £8 million, and £5 million is to be allocated among 100 more bodies, once they apply for funds.

The favoured eight causes are: the homeless charity Centrepoint; the English National Ballet; Great Ormond Street children's hospital; the Leprosy Mission; the National Aids Trust; the Royal Marsden NHS Trust; the Osteopathic Centre for Children; and various organisations dedicated to the eradication of land mines.

Vivienne Parry said: "There will be so many grant announcements that in the end people will take no notice, even though some of them will be for large sums of money. The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund will become part and parcel of everyday life in Britain."

Several charities, including Headway, which helps head injury victims, expressed disappointment that they would have to jostle with more than 100 rival organisations for a share of the £5 million.

Redress for schools if inspectors are unfair

John Carvel
Education Editor

SCHOOLS may be awarded compensation if they can show they were damaged by an unfair inspection report, under a new complaints procedure announced yesterday by the Office for Standards in Education.

Chris Woodhead, the chief inspector, said he would appoint an ombudsman to handle complaints against Ofsted and act as a conciliator. If inspectors were found to be at fault, the adjudicator could call for an apology, changes of behaviour and "compensation for distress".

Mr Woodhead was not able to give examples of mistakes that would merit a financial settlement, or the potential sums involved. But he accepted that schools which lost pupils as a result of an unfair inspection report might have a case for redress.

Ofsted has been unpopular among teachers, and last year Tim Brighouse, chief education officer of Birmingham, accused it of conducting a "reign of terror" in schools. But Mr Woodhead said there were few complaints, and the ombudsman's appointment was designed as a reassurance rather than an admission of difficulty.

Last year more than 7,000 inspections gave rise to 206 formal complaints. Just over half were criticisms of the "over-zealous" conduct of inspectors and most of the rest concerned the quality of school reports. About half came from schools which failed their inspection or were found to have serious weaknesses.

The ombudsman, to be appointed in June, will be called in on a part-time consultancy to handle the small proportion of cases that are not settled after an Ofsted review.

In "exceptional cases" Ofsted would be able to reject the adjudicator's findings but would have to justify this publicly. A faulty inspection report would not be rewritten and the school would not be reinspected, but it would be entitled to make use of the ombudsman's comments.

"I want to be able to stand up and say to any school that

the complaint isn't simply going to be investigated internally," Mr Woodhead said. "I want people to know that if they are not satisfied they have access to someone who is independent of Ofsted."

Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, said the Government proposed an Ofsted ombudsman in its education white paper last summer. The idea was a signal of "Ofsted's coming of age", independent inspection of schools was here to stay.

"There can be no turning the clock back to closed classroom doors, or schools hiding behind public scrutiny in their own secret world," he said. But it was "important for schools to know that there is an external adjudicator who can be involved if they

'I want schools to know they have access to someone independent'

feel they are being dealt with unfairly"

Teachers' leaders criticised the scheme's limitations. Doug McAvoy, National Union of Teachers' general secretary, said: "It is not acceptable that the ombudsman will not be allowed to question judgments in a report or order that it be withdrawn."

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "The power of this new post falls far short of that necessary to give it credibility in the eyes of heads. This is a toothless tiger."

At the scheme's launch yesterday, Mr Woodhead gave the first indication that he would like a second spell as chief inspector when his five-year term expires in 15 months.

"I am not pushing," he said. "I am not nervous about the future. I think there is further work to be done and I would like to do it, unless someone gives me a hugely better offer. I haven't had one yet, but I am not trying to make it one."

The Government is expected to decide on the appointment in September.

Althorp museum plan faces fight

Residents and conservationists horrified by 500-space car park

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

PLANS by Earl Spencer to open a museum at Althorp this summer dedicated to Diana, Princess of Wales, and build a 500-space car park are in jeopardy because of planning problems.

The proposal is due to be considered by the Daventry planning committee tonight and could be thrown out because of strong local opposition and a threat to take legal action if it goes ahead.

At least 150,000 people have already bought tickets to visit the princess's grave and museum, due to open at the beginning of July.

The main argument is over the proposed car park at the gates of Althorp, reached by a single-track road through the village of Great Brington. It is opposed by Brington parish council, which has submitted a consultant's report showing the proposal breaches all planning policies. There is also unease over converting the stable block into a visitors' centre, which will house a museum of Diana's effects.

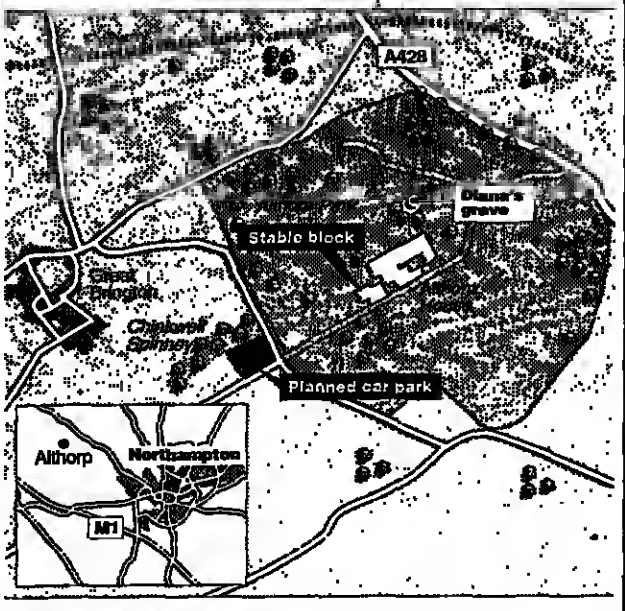
Andrew Shaw, chairman of the council, which represents a village population of 440, said: "We realise that this

area has been changed forever by the fact that the Princess of Wales is buried here and it will be a place of pilgrimage. What we cannot accept is the undue haste of this decision, the quickest, cheapest option without any consideration of the consequences for the environment or the future. We will have a giant car park in the middle of an area of outstanding natural beauty at the end of a single-track road."

The car park is to cater for the 2,500 people a day who have paid £9.50 a head to walk through Althorp Park to the visitors' centre round the house and to the lake to see the island where the princess is buried. Mr Shaw is worried about the thousands of other visitors without tickets who will visit the area.

The Council for the Protection of Rural England, the local Conservative MP Tim Boswell and the MEP Angela Billingham are backing the villagers in their demand for a postponement of the scheme while alternatives are considered.

Henry Oliver, for the CPRE, said: "Althorp itself is a Grade I listed building and the stable block Grade II, the next highest category. We should look carefully at these proposals before building



giant car parks and knocking about buildings of this character. Just because Earl Spencer has sold 150,000 tickets for this summer it does not mean that normal planning considerations should be put on one side."

Mr Shaw said the consultants, Withrham Associates, had suggested a number of alternatives. These included park-and-ride facilities from nearby Northampton, which had the facilities to cope with an influx of visitors. As a short term measure cars could park on fields outside

Althorp Park or a limited number inside. Northampton borough council has given support to alternative car parking ideas at Sixfields on the other side of the park, and the consultants also suggested the reopening of Althorp station, only half a mile from the princess's grave.

Last night the Department of Environment said ministers had been consulted about the Althorp proposals but decided not to intervene to call the decision in ahead of tonight's meeting.

German lawyers want McAliskey tried in UK

Ian Traynor in Bonn
and Owen Bowcott

GERMAN prosecutors yesterday demanded that Roisin McAliskey be tried in Britain for an IRA mortar attack in Osnabrück as her supporters claimed she had contracted brittle bone disease after 15 months in jail and may never fully recover her health.

With the political row over her freedom intensifying, the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, defended his decision to halt her extradition on the grounds of her poor mental health.

McAliskey, with enormous popularity in Ireland, was arrested in 1996 for an IRA mortar attack in Osnabrück as her supporters claimed she had contracted brittle bone disease after 15 months in jail and may never fully recover her health.

"I took account of that and all the other evidence and I made the decision principally on medical grounds," Straw said.

The collapse of the 18 month investigation into Ms McAliskey's alleged role in the 1996 IRA attack on a British army base in northern Germany disappointed federal prosecutors in Karlsruhe.

"We are requesting that the British take over the prosecution," said Eva Schuebel, spokeswoman for the Karlsruhe office. "A suspected criminal has to go before a court."

The prosecutors' insistence that Ms McAliskey not be allowed to go free, however, contrasted with the view of the government in Bonn, which appeared happy to close the book on the IRA case.

Bernhard Boehm, of the justice ministry, signalled German acceptance of Mr Straw's ruling and indicated that Bonn would not be pursuing the matter. "We respect this decision. The case is now closed because the British decision is final," he said.

Germany refuses to extradite its own nationals for trial abroad, insisting on trying



Bernadette McAliskey telling a press conference the family may sue over her daughter's treatment

suspects at home. That stance infuriated the Irish Republic, which refuses to extradite suspects to Germany on the grounds of lack of reciprocity. Ms McAliskey is undergoing treatment at the Maudsley psychiatric hospital, south London, with her daughter, Loinnir, who was born last May.

Yesterday her mother, Bernadette McAliskey, the former Nationalist MP for Mid-Ulster, said: "Roisin is ill and she is ill as a consequence of being arrested and detained in Castlereagh detention centre [in Belfast] and being moved to Holloway and then Belmarsh and back to Holloway."

"My understanding from the Home Office psychiatric report is that my daughter is not expected ever to make a

100 per cent recovery. Roisin's reality is that she may walk with a limp for the rest of her life." Her supporters say she is being examined for osteoporosis (brittle bone disease). Deprived of daylight and having given birth, her body is short of calcium.

In the past the Prison Service has insisted she be given room to exercise on an outside roof.

But her most severe problems, her mother said, were caused by the post-traumatic stress after her arrest and interview at Castlereagh.

As an eight-year-old, Roisin saw her mother wounded in a home near Coalisland, a loyalist gun attack on their County Tyrone.

Ms McAliskey said:

"He detailed events to Roisin in the course of which she remembered things she had not previously been aware of. That's what has made her ill." The family is contemplating legal action for compensation. Ms McAliskey is expected to remain in the hospital for a time.

Under the terms of her bail she had been able to visit her partner, Sean McCotter, who has moved to south London to be near her.

She is said to have become fixated on her young daughter.

One of her supporters who told her that she was now free to leave hospital, said she appeared bewildered, and replied: "But all my clothes are here."

Richard Norton-Taylor

THE VOICE on the line was extremely polite. "Hello, the Security Service, how can I help you?"

How long the team answering calls to MI5's first published phone number can keep up the friendly tone is a matter of speculation. The number is aimed primarily at terrorists or

subversives ready to turn double agent. But yesterday security sources anticipated a "massive feeding frenzy" when the number - 0171 930 9000 - was published in newspapers this morning.

The number can also be got through Directory Inquiries and will appear in new directories under both "Security Service" and "MI5" - an open invitation, the agency was aware, to hoaxers. "Serious callers should not be put off if they have to wait," counselled an anxious security source.

MI5 believed that the phonenumber was worth the trouble, and denied it was a stunt. Calls would be recorded and operators would establish the bona

fides of people offering information they deemed significant. Asked how they would do this, security sources resorted to their customary cynicism.

The idea, said MI5, was to make the agency more effective, to attract potentially valuable agents - people who could provide information about terrorist groups, uncover foreign spies, or thwart the export of parts for nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.

MI5 pointed out that its number should not be confused with the police anti-terrorist hotline (0800 789 321), and was not designed to replace 999 calls to emergency services. It was a "one-way channel", not a general inquiry line.

MI5's first published phone number can keep up the friendly tone is a matter of speculation. The number is aimed primarily at terrorists or

subversives ready to turn double agent. But yesterday security sources anticipated a "massive feeding frenzy" when the number - 0171 930 9000 - was published in newspapers this morning.

The number can also be got through Directory Inquiries and will appear in new directories under both "Security Service" and "MI5" - an open invitation, the agency was aware, to hoaxers. "Serious callers should not be put off if they have to wait," counselled an anxious security source.

MI5 believed that the phonenumber was worth the trouble, and denied it was a stunt. Calls would be recorded and operators would establish the bona

Shakespeare trod the boards, Molière proved to be a greater dramatist than he was a comic actor. Writing your own lines

Arts, G2 page 8

Mot



man and family

T

Problems

case 1:

case 2:

case 3:

case 4:

case 5:

case 6:

case 7:

case 8:

case 9:

case 10:

case 11:

case 12:

case 13:

case 14:

case 15:

case 16:

case 17:

case 18:

case 19:

case 20:

case 21:

case 22:

case 23:

case 24:

case 25:

case 26:

case 27:

case 28:

case 29:

case 30:

case 31:

case 32:

case 33:

case 34:

case 35:

case 36:

case 37:

case 38:

case 39:

case 40:

case 41:

case 42:

case 43:

case 44:

case 45:

case 46:

case 47:

case 48:

case 49:

case 50:

case 51:

case 52:

case 53:

case 54:

case 55:

case 56:

case 57:

case 58:

case 59:

case 60:

case 61:

case 62:

case 63:

case 64:

case 65:

case 66:

case 67:

case 68:

case 69:

case 70:

case 71:

case 72:

Redress to schools if inspectors are unfair

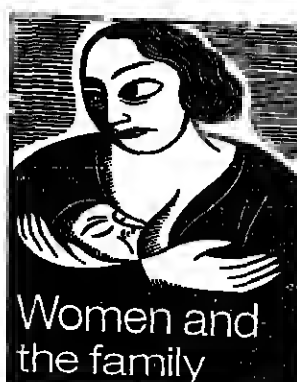
S

ers want
ied in UK

JP 11/03/93

Child care subsidies offer the poor a choice — to work or not — but for Conservatives they raised dilemmas that could also trip up Labour

Mothers in the moral maze



POLLY TOYNBEE looks at single motherhood and its political and welfare costs, arguing for more child benefit for the less well off and giving them the choice whether to work

There were good reasons why the Conservatives never got to grips with welfare reform — and why Labour stands a better chance, starting with next Tuesday's "budget for women and children". The Tories were stymied by an intractable moral conundrum at the heart of welfare policy that made effective reform impossible. It was the old government watched inert as the numbers of single mothers on income support soared to more than a million, with their 1.8 million children growing ever poorer. At a

time when most women with children work (including a majority of those with children under five), the Tories did nothing about the fact that the great majority of single mothers do not work. Every time they examined the social security budget it was obvious that the largest employable group was mothers. Yet they did nothing. Why? Because the only way to urge single mothers out to work is to offer them large child care subsidies. But giving more to single mothers snatched at attacking family values. In Tory-think, free child care would be yet another inducement to young girls to get themselves preg-

nant. Moralists like John Gummer wanted to put them in punitive church-run mother and baby hostels, as a deterrent. Other draft ideas abounded. Their only sensible, non-morally laden plan was to force absent fathers to pay — but that is still far beyond the reach of the Child Support Agency.

The other stumbling block for the Conservatives was one Labour is running into now: emotional confusion about the nature of motherhood, that icon of mother and child. Good mothers should stay at home and care for their children. The spectre of working mothers unlocks a host of terrors about where society is going. Is not juvenile crime due to lack of good parenting? Does not mother rolling out the pastry for tea represent all that is dreamy and wishful about ideal family life?

So every time the Tories thought angrily of the scrounging single mother breeding babies on benefits they wanted to do something tough. But every time they thought about encouraging those mothers to stand on their own feet panic paralysed them, trapping single parents in a Tory moral maze. Now Labour steps in, free from some of the constraints of Conservatism — but not all. It

Child care facts

- Expenditure**
- 2 percent, 2 children household
 - Average housing costs £3,797 pa
 - Average food costs £3,868 pa
 - Typical child care costs £5,915 pa
- Cost of care**
- Typical child care costs (per child, per week)
 - Child-minder for pre-school child: £50 - £120
 - Private nursery: £70 - £180
 - Nanny: £20 - £280
 - Out-of-school club: £15 - £30
 - After-school child-minder: £25 - £50
 - Holiday play scheme: £50 - £80
- Facts**
- There is one registered child care place for every nine children aged under eight
 - Less than 10 per cent of the cost of child care is met through employers' subsidies
 - Publicly funded child care is available for 2% of children under three in the UK compared with 48% in Denmark and 20% in France



is worth remembering this old history, because the current debate about child care is beginning to be overshadowed by some of the same confusions. At least Labour does not have to blame lone mothers, so it can offer child care without all that old moral worrying. But it is facing the same hang-ups about perfect motherhood. The debate is hotting up. There seems to be a frenetic sense that motherhood is

somehow at risk. However, no one is suggesting that any mothers will be made to work. Those who want choice should celebrate that this money for child care extends choice to a million single mothers who had no choice before. Nor is there danger of this becoming compulsory — that would be politically impossible. In Wisconsin all welfare mothers have to work, but it costs the state 60 per cent more as they

have to provide universal high-quality child care. I cannot see our Treasury driving reluctant mothers into work at such a high price.

So what is the fuss about? Before anyone has drawn breath to celebrate the new child care, the argument has moved on. All around people are expressing anxiety about why the state is paying to help mothers to work but not to stay at home. This is a curiously warped argument. We are talking about child care for the very poorest — state-dependants; we are not talking about society at large.

Should mothers work? That is none of the state's business. The great majority of mothers do work, from choice or necessity. But the state is right to worry that those who work least are those who need to most: single mothers living on benefits. Some mothers choose not to work, often at some sacrifice to the family income, and that is their business. But others are forced not to work by the benefit system. That is public business. The Independent has misguidedly been campaigning for a general tax relief for child care, for rich and poor alike. If that were on the cards — which it is not — then the recent clamour for giving all mothers at home

equal family tax allowances would only be fair. But there is no reason why the state should give tax relief for either. However, the Treasury does have a legitimate concern about its own income support and family credit dependants.

Many indignant letters arriving at the Guardian suggest that full-time mothering is always best. Other mothers reply equally indignantly that the great majority of women who manage to juggle children and jobs are not bad mothers.

Research suggests there is no evidence that working mothers do children harm. There is much evidence of the good nurseries do for future educational chances, for all the hysteria about "dumping children on strangers". (The Government is planning education as an ingredient in all child care.)

There is also evidence that in many families full-time mothering is by no means best for children. Depressed poor mothers, trapped with little social contact and no hope, often do not provide the best upbringing. The children of single mothers who work do better educationally than the children of those who do not. It raises horizons, brings the world of work into the

home and makes mothers less isolated. All this is why choice is what matters.

The Chancellor could ease controversy over working mothers by increasing child benefit for the less well off. The Guardian/ICM poll yesterday suggested overwhelming support for this targeted approach. It would be entirely neutral as to whether mothers work, helping both poorer women who stay at home and those with jobs, without creating work disincentives.

But even with better child benefit, life for families on income support will be bleak. We are not going to reach some golden age of high taxation where they will be well provided for. As ever, the poor have less choice than the rich, and a greater need to work.

So each mother will have to make up her own mind about whether going out to work will do more good or harm to her family. Is there child care she trusts and a job worth doing? Better-off mothers have always made their own choices, and the state has had nothing to do with it. So why is there all this angst about extending the same choices to the poor, who need opportunities so much more?

Tomorrow is Britain a family-friendly country?



Marianne McLaren (left) with two of her three children, and Barbara Dawson, with some of the children she looks after as a child minder, a job she started when her youngest son was two

PHOTOGRAPHS: JEFF MORGAN (left), JOHN ANDERSON



Problems and solutions in coping with children and careers

Case 1: Trying to keep going with constant balancing act

"THE holidays are the most difficult time. It's a planning exercise which we have to do six months in advance. Without grandparents the whole thing would fall apart," says Marianne McLaren, a faculty manager at Gloucester and Cheltenham College of Higher Education.

She has three children, Edward, aged nine, Cecilia, six, and Lucy, four. Edward is at boarding school, Cecilia at a local primary and Lucy is at Mrs McLaren's workplace nursery. "The most difficult thing about working and family life is dealing with the unexpected — for example, if Lucy is ill and I'm having to work from home, I have to keep 10 days back from my holiday allocation of 32 days specifically to cover this kind of domestic crisis; last year it was chicken pox. "I'm fortunate because the college has an 'on-call' responsibilities policy" which is very family friendly. I don't have to

take sick leave to cover for when my children are sick. I bring work home and catch up. As a manager of 18 people I operate the same policy for those who work for me. My husband can also help out and sometimes work from home. "She is also lucky in having a workplace nursery which provides good quality affordable care. Cecilia goes to an after school club, which she loves, until Mrs McLaren can pick her up at 6pm. "What is far more difficult is the holidays. Edward and Cecilia's holidays do not always coincide. "In Cheltenham, we are lucky there are lots of activities for chil-

dren such as football, dancing or swimming club. Then, both my husband and I take time out and to end. Finally, we have two sets of grandparents who can help out; they both live about 2½ hours' drive away, but we still manage to have an extended family. "It's a constant balancing act. When it goes well, it's incredibly satisfying. As soon as there is any problem, it becomes very stressful. You can feel pulled in two different directions. "I didn't work for three years while I looked after the kids. I love being at home but I find being back at work very stimulating and satisfying."

Case 2: Child minder's £2 an hour service to community

BARBARA Dawson, 22, who lives in Rawdon, near Leeds, says: "I started as a child minder 22 years ago when my youngest, Stuart, was two and I thought he needed some company. Child minding was in its infancy then, and my mother was disgusted at the idea of looking after children while their mothers went to work. "But child minding suited

me because I could work it round looking after my own family. When I started, my eldest, Andrew, was 10, and Simon was seven. My husband is very tolerant; he has to be, we have two little girls who arrive at 7.30am. Mind, he never comes home until after 6pm by which time, I've cleared up all the mess. "I've looked after more than 400 children over the years. Some children spend most of the day with me, others I just drop off at school and pick them up for an hour afterwards. "As a child minder, people are very dependent on you, and you can't let yourself be ill; most child minders soldier on through the flu. The other

thing is that nobody goes into child minding to make a fortune. "I probably make about £80 a week, I charge £2 per hour or part of an hour. I know some child minders who charge more, but you have to gear your fees according to your neighbourhood. The mothers don't get any benefit to help with child care. I have three weeks holiday a year and I don't ask the parents to pay. I reckon I'm not entitled to holiday pay. "With the additional fuel and food bills, the 'horrendous' wear and tear on the house and keeping a good stock of toys, Mrs Dawson finds she is not eligible for tax now, although she has been in the

past. The job has proved a considerable intrusion into her own family life. "Both Mrs Dawson's husband and her son, Stuart, are registered as helpers with social services — registration involves police checks — so that they can help out in the house if needed. "The work requires enormous flexibility to fit in with the shift work patterns of the parents... Social services are very strict about insisting that I never have any more than six children. Sometimes there are heavy snowfalls round here, and the school is suddenly closed. I often find myself taking on extra children to help parents out. I feel responsible for them."

Case 3: 'I'd like to pay tax. I'm not a scrounger'

LINDA has two teenage sons, Tom, aged 19 and Mark, aged 16. One has a job and is financially independent leaving her to provide for one son and her five-year-old daughter, Mary. She has never married and never had help from the two fathers of her children. She lives in a council flat in Glasgow and has worked whenever able. As soon as Mark was at school, she took on cleaning jobs in private homes; the day before Mary was born, she was working. She has also always claimed benefit. "When the boys were young, I only had benefit. I remember it was £16 a week paid on a Monday after the Social Security had deducted

for my fuel bills. By Tuesday, it was finished and I always had to borrow from my mum every week. Then I paid her back the next week. "The worst time of all was when I had Mary. I only had benefit — it was £80 a week then — with two boys in secondary school and a new baby. It was hell. I had no money to buy things for the baby. I had to borrow money for a nappy. I had to use the cheapest nappies. "When Mary was two, I found a cleaning job where they didn't mind me bringing her along. I could never have done that with any of the boys, but Mary was very good and didn't make a mess. I put her in a church-run play group in the mornings for a couple of hours near to where I worked. I could pick her up and go back to work easily. "At that point, I would have liked a nursery place for Mary but there weren't any I could afford. I couldn't have got a proper job because I still needed to be around for the

boys; they were 13 and 16 then and they used to fight each other a lot. I couldn't just go out and leave them. "Now Mary is at school, I've started some child minding. I'd like to do some training in office skills, reception or word processing. It's easier to do that now I only have to look after the one child. "I still don't declare, although I'd like to. But I've done the sums, and they don't add up. I earn about £141 a week now but I declare that, I would lose my income support, my housing benefit, my council tax and free school dinners which adds up to about £180. "It bothers me that I have no financial security. I'd like to pay tax. I'm not a scrounger like we're called. I don't feel quite so bad now because my two boys are both paying income tax." (All names have been changed to protect identities.)

Case studies by Madeleine Bunting.

Dustin HOFFMAN Robert DE NIRO

A Hollywood producer. A Washington spin-doctor. When they get together, they can make you believe anything.

Wag the dog

A comedy about truth, justice and other special effects.

2 ACADEMY AWARDS BEST ACTOR BEST SCREENPLAY

AT CINEMAS NATIONWIDE FROM MARCH 13TH

To pick up a low cost loan, just pick up the phone.

AMOUNT OF LOAN	APRIL	36 MONTHLY REPAYMENTS	TOTAL PAYABLE
£1,000	12.5%	£101.33	£3,647.88
£5,000	12.5%	£499.66	£17,973.6

0181 680 9966 0161 831 9966 0141 248 9966
LONDON MANCHESTER GLASGOW
CALL ANYTIME 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm Saturday.
www.directline.co.uk Please quote ref. GA18

Direct Line Financial Services Limited, 250 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SH.
You must be aged 22 or over. Loans from £1,000 to £15,000, subject to status.
Available in England, Scotland and Wales. Written quotation on request.
Calls recorded and monitored. Please use the red phone.
are trademarks of Direct Line Insurance plc, used with its permission.

Mourners vent fury at Serb 'genocide'

Dusan Stojanovic in Srbica

ETHNIC Albanians filed solemnly past charred and disfigured corpses shrouded by long white sheets yesterday, trying to recognise relatives who died in last week's Serbian police crackdown in Kosovo.

"Look what the Serb savages did. They killed women and children," said a man who identified himself only as Fazli. "How does anyone expect us to forget this terrible massacre?"

Serb police had threatened to bury the dead in a mass grave if the decomposing bodies were not claimed yesterday. Relatives accuse the Serbs of wanting to cover up atrocities by a swift funeral. They want independent autopsies before they will accept the bodies.

At least four children and a dozen women were among the

he was reaching out for his mother, who lay next to him.

When Fazli found his brother among the dead, he knelt next to the corpse, which had half an arm severed, and began to sob quietly.

"This genocide has dashed all hopes that we could live together with Serbs again," said a man who gave his name only as Rexhep.

The official death toll from last week's violence in the province is 46 ethnic Albanians and six Serb police. The Albanians say at least 80 of their kin died in two police sweeps through the Drenica region. Twenty-five were buried a week ago at a funeral attended by 30,000 mourners.

A list published in the local Koha Ditore newspaper identified 29 of those killed, among them 22 members of Adem Jashari's family. Serbs say Jashari was the leader of the "terrorist" Kosovo Liberation Army, which they are trying to crush after its attacks on policemen.

In Pristina, meanwhile, the United States envoy to the Balkans, Robert Gelbard, yesterday met the leader of the main ethnic Albanian party, Ibrahim Rugova, who advocates a peaceful struggle for independence from Serbia.

Mr Gelbard said that he was "very much in agreement" with Mr Rugova on most issues, and felt the onus was now largely, though not entirely, on the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, to end the fighting.

"We feel there has to be the initiative on the part of the government of the federal republic of Yugoslavia of measures to stop the violence," Mr Gelbard said. "In fact, the violence must be stopped on both sides."

Putting more pressure on Mr Milosevic, the president of Montenegro — the only other republic in Yugoslavia — criticised him for allowing the Kosovo problem to fester.

Kosovo "has been long neglected and naively underestimated", Milo Djukanovic said. "The delay is politically irresponsible and without any wisdom."

Mr Djukanovic, who has turned against Mr Milosevic in recent months, did not directly criticise the police action, but said "the spilling of blood in Kosovo must stop immediately". — AP.

Leader comment, page 9



An ethnic Albanian queues in Srbica yesterday to see whether his relatives were among those killed in last week's Serbian crackdown. The official toll is 46 ethnic Albanians, but Albanians say at least 80 died. PHOTOGRAPH BY PETAR KURUNJIC

Nato to protect Balkans with Kosovo firewall

David Fairhall

NATO is preparing to build a firewall round the Serbian province of Kosovo to prevent ethnic conflict spreading to the rest of the Balkans.

The alliance is alarmed at the possibility of Albania, Macedonia and perhaps even Greece — a Nato member — becoming involved in clashes between Serbian police and Kosovo separatists erupt into civil war.

Existing military links with Albania under Nato's Partnership for Peace (PfP) pact are expected to be strengthened today when a senior delegation from Tirana visits Nato headquarters in Brussels.

The Albanian defence secretary, Ferid Fetaj, who will head the delegation, said yesterday he might request the deployment of Nato troops along his country's borders, or even in Kosovo.

"My idea is that they should monitor the border to add credibility to our statements that we do not allow the shipment of weapons, and that we are oriented towards peace, not war," he said.

Meanwhile an agreement earlier this week by the six country Contact Group to extend and adapt the United Nations "Preventive Deployment" force in Macedonia, opens up the option of this job being delegated to Nato. The Contact Group, originally formed to deal with the Bosnia crisis, consists of the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia.

Today's meeting in Brussels, summoned by Albania, will be the first time a member of the PfP — the Nato partnership which fosters military links with non-members — has sought emergency consultation.

Apart from urging the

Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic to halt repression of the majority ethnic-Albanian population of Kosovo, Nato ambassadors are likely to offer closer military co-operation with Albania and activate plans to cope with a refugee exodus.

During the past six months Nato has been helping the democratised Albanian army recover from last year's political upheavals — for example, by advising on the secure storage of weapons and ammunition. This programme is likely to be stepped up to include senior exchanges, joint exercises and warship visits, even if a request for immediate troop deployments is refused.

We should monitor the border to prove we do not allow shipment of arms

In Macedonia, the UN already has a small military presence of 750 troops, of whom 400 are American, with the remainder from Norway, Denmark and one non-Nato country, Finland.

Monday's meeting of the Contact Group said it would "support the maintenance of an international military presence on the ground" when the current UN Preventive Deployment mandate expires in August.

The follow-on force is likely to be larger and could be organised by Nato, albeit under a renewed UN mandate, as recent peacekeeping forces in Bosnia have been.

The foreign ministers of Greece, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania and Turkey yesterday urged Belgrade to restore autonomy to Kosovo as a step towards resolving the conflict. — AP.

Shooting sparks West Bank riots

Julian Borger Middle East Correspondent

ISRAELI soldiers shot dead three Palestinians and wounded at least four others when they opened fire on a van at a checkpoint near the divided West Bank city of Hebron, sparking serious riots in the city centre.

An Israeli Defence Force (IDF) statement said soldiers opened fire when the van driver tried to ram their roadblock near the village of Idna, injuring a soldier. But Palestinian police accused the Israeli troops of opening fire without provocation.

Brigadier General Abdel Fatah Jideh, the Palestinian police commander in Hebron, said: "This was a Ford minibus taxi bringing workers from Israeli territory back to the West Bank. It was totally in control. The soldiers fired on them without reason."

Other Palestinian sources speculated that the van driver might have lost control at the checkpoint.

A Western official based in Hebron said "severe riots" had broken out in the city centre. "The Palestinians are throwing Molotov cocktails and pipe bombs [home-made explosives]. The Israelis are firing back with rubber bullets."

There have been at least two injured from the clashes already," the official said.

Gen Jideh confirmed that riots had broken out, but added: "I am on my way now. It will be under control."

The IDF statement said the Israeli commanding officer in the area, General Uzi Dayan, had ordered a full inquiry into the incident, and that Israeli and Palestinian security forces were co-operating to keep order.

According to the IDF statement, four Palestinians were injured, two of them seriously. A policeman on duty at a Hebron hospital said eight people had gunshot wounds and three of them were in a serious condition.

The incident showed signs last night of igniting the volatile tensions in Hebron, a persistent West Bank flashpoint. A Palestinian policeman at Hebron public hospital claimed one of the Israeli soldiers involved had "been to kill" written in English on his uniform.

A Palestinian official in the Hebron mayor's office said the slogan was common among Israeli border police patrolling the area and seen as highly provocative by local people.

The claim was denied by an IDF spokesman.

Moshe Fogel, the Israeli government spokesman, rejected claims that Israeli troops had over-reacted. "The checkpoint clearly signalled the vehicle to stop. It did not stop and it ran over a soldier, fortunately only lightly wounding him," Mr Fogel said.

"The Israeli soldiers in order to stop what appeared to be a terrorist vehicle, which still could be a terrorist vehicle, opened fire."

Europe waits to read runes of Danish vote

Stephen Bates in Copenhagen

DENMARK'S Social Democrat government looks likely to be thrown out and replaced with a coalition from the centre-right as the country goes to the polls today.

The result is being watched closely throughout the European Union for pointers to bow the Danes will vote in a referendum on May 28 on whether to ratify last year's Amsterdam treaty which paves the way for EU enlargement.

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, prime minister for the past five years, seems to have miscalculated badly by calling the election six months early — and 10 weeks before the vote to endorse the treaty his government negotiated.

Late opinion polls showed his rival, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, the rightwing former foreign minister, is likely to squeeze ahead.

Because EU treaties must be ratified by all 15 member states before they can be implemented, the constitutional obligation in Denmark to put treaties to a referendum could conceivably scupper the Amsterdam project and jeopardise enlargement.

The signs, however, are that a change of government will not affect the outcome because Danish conservatives seem, if anything, even keener to secure the treaty's endorsement.

In a referendum in 1992 Danes narrowly rejected the Maastricht treaty, negotiated by Mr Ellemann-Jensen as foreign minister — a verdict overturned when the question was put to them again the following year.

This time, with Mr Rasmussen and Mr Ellemann-Jensen both backing Amsterdam, the polls show a 20-point lead in favour of ratification.

Both men are much more enthusiastic about Europe than the electorate. Even though Denmark, like Britain, has an opt-out from the single currency, the two leaders would like to join as soon as a yes vote can be secured in a further referendum.

Voters appear to have given

their centre-left government little credit for the country's economic prosperity and falling unemployment. The three-week campaign brutally exposed Mr Rasmussen's lack of policy ideas and, because there was broad agreement between the parties on most issues, immigration emerged as the key concern.

Mr Ellemann-Jensen, a

land promise of tax cuts while maintaining services went down well. His pledge to tighten immigration rules helped too.

"There is a chance we will form a government but I am always very careful about committing hubris," he said with a broad grin. "I have guarded optimism."

Yesterday Mr Rasmussen was in the Stroget, Copenhagen's main shopping street, on a last, desperate walkabout in search of votes. He has not impressed voters with his claims that his rival's promises on tax do not add up.

Although Danes are grumbling about the presidential style of elections these days, Mr Rasmussen appeared without security. A few party workers banded him red roses — in a conscious echo of Tony Blair — to give voters.

The prime minister peeled off leaves and thorns from the stems as he offered them to anyone who stopped and chatted. He muttered: "I'll need every vote tomorrow."

If he loses, he knows defeat will be his fault. His decision to call the snap election took his party's chief strategist by surprise.

"The trouble is Rasmussen's attempted to copy Tony Blair and he's ended up looking like John Major," said one political journalist.

Niels Helveg Petersen, the foreign minister and a member of the small Social-Liberal party which is a junior coalition partner in the government, sighed: "I would have preferred the election to happen later. There is general satisfaction with the economy, inflation is low, we have the best record in Europe for reducing unemployment. It's quite clear there is good news... perhaps good things are just not very interesting to voters."

Nearly 10 per cent of the vote is expected to be won by fringe rightwing parties calling for Denmark's tiny minority of black immigrants to be sent home.

If the result is as close as expected, the parties are likely to have to negotiate for coalitions, and even the four seats returned by Greenland and the Faroe Islands may be decisive.

Absent guest dims EU lunch

Ian Black Diplomatic Editor

BRITAIN is putting a brave face on Turkey's refusal to attend tomorrow's grand European Conference in London, where Tony Blair and the Queen will celebrate the European Union's embrace of former communist countries.

President Suleyman Demirel will be the ghost at the feast as the leaders of the EU's 15 members and 11 aspirants meet in Lancaster House and then lunch at Buckingham Palace.

It will be a largely ceremonial although happy occasion for Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia and Cyprus, all starting accession talks at the end of this month, and a consolation prize for Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia, who have some time to go before they can do the same.

Turkey's refusal to attend, out of pique at not being invited to join even the second wave, stores up problems for its future relations with the EU and for the Cyprus accession talks, which can be blocked by the Turkish north of the divided island.

It is an old story, but the latest trouble began in December when the Luxembourg summit denied Turkey a place in the queue. This week the prime minister, Mesut Yilmaz,

angrily accused Germany of blocking Turkey in favour of creating more Christian "bureaucracy" in its eastern European backyard.

The conference was originally devised to offer Turkey a pan-European framework to compensate for the loss of an accession plan. But British diplomats, well-versed in the arts of damage control, are insisting now that it was never so narrowly focused.

"The meeting is the message," a senior Foreign Office official said yesterday. "It's a shame the Turks aren't coming, but their participation was not the main reason for convening this conference."

Nevertheless, Britain is dismayed at the failure to swing Ankara round, and is trying to assuage Turkey by insisting that there is no place in a free and united Europe for a "Berlin Wall" of culture or religion.

Inclusion and comprehensiveness will be the buzzwords of the day, as stable west Europeans are urged to accept that there is a yearning for real institutions in the countries that endured years of people's democracies and fake parliaments.

Mr Blair wants the conference to focus on the themes he has been pushing inside the EU: drugs, organised crime and the environment.

It is intended to be the inaugural session of an annual heads-of-state conference.

Stealthy British presidency leaves its partners cold

Martin Walker in Brussels

TOMORROW'S London conference of aspirant European Union members is an opportunity for Britain to bolster a limp presidency.

But true to dispiriting form, the key player will be distinguished by its absence. Turkey's boycott underlines what some EU partners are privately calling the Stealth Presidency.

"Quiet. Too quiet. It must be a trap," a German official quipped after Gordon Brown chaired this week's finance ministers' meeting. A thin agenda which could have been handled by officials was wrapped up in time for lunch.

Britain has made only an inch or so of progress towards lifting the EU ban on its beef. The fishing row with Spain simmers on. British regions, Northern Ireland and the Scottish Highlands look like being big losers in the new structural funds budget.

"This UK presidency has been a chronicle of missed opportunities," the Tory MEP Graham Mather complains, seeing no progress even in the uncontroversial British promise to tidy up and simplify EU regulations.

"We have not seen much evidence of that British

promise to put the environment at the heart of its presidency," commented Tony Long, director of the EU office of the World Wide Fund for Nature.

"We have just had another speech by John Prescott about the damage the Common Agricultural Policy does to the environment. But in substance, the best we can say is that the jury is still out."

'This presidency is a chronicle of missed opportunities'

With no big EU treaty negotiations under way, and the single currency and EU enlargement already charted, Britain's presidency was never going to be a historic event. Perhaps wisely, Mr Blair took civil service advice and decided to do little, but to do it well enough to convince the other 14 members that Britain was now a co-operative team player.

Nearly half way through the term, the softly-softer strategy is succeeding almost too well. The few headlines have been of the wrong kind. Robin Cook's

early attempts at a foreign policy consensus on Algeria and Iran and a new code of conduct for the arms trade was undermined when the Israeli crisis once again divided Britain's loyalties between the US alliance and the EU partners.

So this week sees the fanfare: not just the London conference of heads of government from the Atlantic to the Russian border but also this weekend's foreign ministers' meeting in Edinburgh.

By then, the officials in Brussels should have agreed on the size and remit of the policy planning unit for the common foreign and security policy, which the Amsterdam treaty agreed to establish.

A truly common policy will prove elusive for years to come, but at last the British can claim they set up the planning unit.

The main theme at Edinburgh will be the Middle East. It will be agreed that Mr Blair can talk tough for the whole EU when he goes to Israel next week.

Binyamin Netanyahu may not be quaking in his boots, but Yasser Arafat should expect some hard questioning about the fate of the EU's £1 billion, the bulk of the international effort to sustain the Palestinian Authority.

Indu nationalised to gove

nuclear ship

sex-mayor

welcomed

headed with

hangs on dog's

accusations

may have been

divorce 'mud

pile-up injured

brings the h

20/11/98

Comment

Matthew Norman

Persuading poujadists



This was her second business meeting. "I thought that's all it would take, but plainly I still have to go round to each one of them to explain it better." She was infuriated by the misinformation: no, there was no extra health and safety nonsense; oo, the employment service was not going to be snooping; not important, oo, the police would not be sending out dead-beat criminals and illiterate drug addicts.

Andrew Smith said this was the toughest meeting he'd done so far. Indeed, it wasn't encouraging. In some areas the new deal has done well in signaling up employers, but it's not easy.

The businessmen sneered at the lack of social skills and motivation of the unemployed, scrounging on the taxpayer. But they lacked much sense of social responsibility themselves. It was all the bottom line, and what's-in-it-for-me.

Their attitudes are more likely to be a problem than the attitudes of the young. I sat in on some of the first interviews between new dealers and their personal advisers in one of the pilot schemes already running in Lambeth. They arrived nervous and suspicious, but after a few minutes, handed a shovel and made to work regardless of their ambitions and their skills. But without exception each of them left astonished and delighted by what was on offer. Most had never had a long personal interview before and were astonished to find a personal adviser who would be there for them throughout the next 10 months.

A cartoon illustration of two men. The man on the left is wearing a cap and overalls, holding a sign that says 'UNMOVED'. The man on the right is wearing a suit and a bowler hat, also holding a sign that says 'UNMOVED'. They are both looking at each other.

Britain's bosses - sullen, selfish and contemptuous of the poor

Most of them were not the unemployable drifters so feared by the chamber of commerce — some were graduates with less useful degrees who needed help to get started. Fers of eutuing up on some communitarian environmental task force were blowing away by offers that dazzled the eye. A "site-specific installation artist" was amazed to be offered a practical media-management course. A completely filthy young man who wanted to work in a ring was sent on a hygiene course, and he'd get training. A girl interested in arts administration couldn't believe her luck at the chance of a work placement at the National Theatre. Of course, the early days are all over and the best options are still available. It will be many more businesses to make offers of all kinds to

The employment service is doing a brilliant job in transforming itself into a sensitive careers service. The young are likely to respond well, if the choices in jobs and training are good. But if the employers refuse to join in, the new deal can't work. If the "business" community, as it likes to call itself, is so unmoved by the new national mood, if they cause the new deal to fail, then they deserve to be punished by any taxes the Chancellor chooses to windroll on them over the next years. So the word had better start circulating in the chambers and the golf clubs and the bars — sign up now, or else.

Dumbing down? Nonsense – the whole British nation is ‘braining up’



WHAT'S this? Oasis on *The Archers*? David Bowie on *Desert Island Discs*? Is there no end to the BBC's determination to dumb down? And, look out, there's worse to come. On Monday Radio 4 Controller James Boyle will unveil the new schedule — dumbed down, no doubt, to the point of imbecility. The *Daily Telegraph* was surely not exaggerating yesterday when it gave us this chilling warning: "Get ready for the battle to save

of the Dalai Lama — with only a glimpse of a machine-gun massacre in two-and-a-half hours.

Spielberg has been knocked for "dumbing down" such a serious topic as the slave trade, in order to render it palatable in the multiplex — often by the same people who moan that Hollywood never grapples with difficult subject matter. But it's possible to see the director's efforts another way: as a pretty successful attempt to "brain up" the

gradual merging of national culture in the middle. Instead of one language for the élite, and another for the working man, a new shared vernacular is taking shape. We once occupied separate worlds, either Radio 3 or Radio 1. Now any of us can listen to Classic FM.

You'd think we would celebrate this collective smartening-up. And yet most moves toward popularising are seen the other way, condemned in the dread phrase "dumbing

now about dumbing down," confirms John Carey, Merton Professor of English at Oxford. In his book, *Intellectuals And The Masses*, he revealed the elite's panic at the prospect that, thanks to the 1970 Education Act, learning was about to become a mass pursuit. It was no coincidence, Carey argues, that Woolf, Joyce and the other prophets of Modernism set out to write incomprehensible novels — just as the mob was learning to read. What

YESTERDAY, in a rare foray into lunch, the always busy Prince of Grozovetrov House hotel for the TRIC (no, I've no idea) TV awards. Presenting prizes was a motionless Prince Michael of Kent (if they are going to let him out, someone really ought to tell him that he's a coward), while competing was his friend Sir Bernard Ingham, the noted astrologer. The highlight came when Bernarke introduced his boss from a previous career, a certain Lady Thatcher. The old lady, looking rather sober, ambled on to the stage, and announced Michael Pahl-in - or Pahl-lin, as she put it - as winner of best EBC show for Fall Circle With Michael Pahl-in. What followed was a bit of a head bobble. Mr. Pahl-in told an anecdote about how, in a South American village he visited, the people had an ingenious way of fermenting things even when they were out of beer. They did it, he explained, "with the saliva of old women". Then he glanced at the Baronesse. "No offence," he said. She looked up at him, buffed by the remark, and said, "I'm having mirth that greeted it. What a man that Pahl-in is."

This image shows a blank white page. There are dark vertical bars along the left and right edges, which appear to be scanning artifacts or the edges of the paper. The central area is completely empty and white.

But what if the Cassandras are wrong? What if the "braining" is not a metaphor for the "brain-busting" but rather, in Mr. Boyle's phrase, "braining up"—not just on Radio 4, but in all those corners of our culture assumed to have been debased by the need to bring more people in? Indeed, perhaps all the panic about "dumbing down" the "horrible" phrase, itself pretty moronic, designed to conceal one of the élite's oldest and ugliest traits: its fierce determination to keep the cultural jewels all to itself.

For, contrary to the received notion, the evidence of braining-up is all around, from the newspapers we read to the movies we see. Stephen Spielberg once devoted himself to tales of long-fingered aliens and hungry sharks. Now he's setting out to do the cinematic equivalent of the "brainer" episodes in human history, whether the Holocaust in Schindler's List or slavery in Amistad. Martin Scorsese built a reputation as the blood-spattered maestro of Mean Streets and Goodfellas. Now he's doing a little more than a long, thoughtful biography

The latest trends prize the "dumbed-down" style. When Longitude and Format's Last Theorem — confiction accounts of the lives of a cartographer and mathematician respectively — top the best-sellers list, are those authors dumbing down? Or are readers smartening up? Much is made of the "dumbed-down" style of our country newspapers, all of them happy to put All Saints on the front page rather than the latest cabaret reshuffa in Nepal. It is a sign, say the pessimists, that the culture is being coarsened. But, as the Guardian's own Ron Givens' study of the five major broad-sheets shows no great scarcity in quality. The brainy stuff is still there, even if it is now surrounded by supplements on self-furnishings and the Spice Girls.

As for dumbing down, sales figures reveal formerly-tabloid readers "trading up" to buy broadsheet newspapers. Cheaper prices and more accessible presentation have ensured that the broadsheets are no longer "the poor man's paper" as they were in the Daily Mail. The result is a

down. How *come?* The answer lies in the snobbish *snob* who refuses so much of British life.

The well-bessed Radio 4 listener can't sincerely believe the station has dumbed down. Two decades ago the Today programme did not debate the minutiae of social policy, and told light tales of knitting vicars and skateboarding ducks. *Start the Week* was then a colloquium of science and culture, but inoffensive chat fronted by Richard Baker. Radio 4 is incomparably smarter now than it was then.

But that to the cultural snob, is precisely the *snob*. The *snob* knows this sure is meant to be ours," they think – even if they would never say so out loud. If *Amistad* was four hours long, ideally with subtitles, it would have been deluged with praise. But now the *snob* upbraid the *snob* for allowing *Amistad* to be so. To such special-interest knowledge! Let him stay in Jurassic Park; this is *ours*.

This is not a new reaction from the British ruling class. "If one heard what was said in the 1880s and 1890s about the *snob*," says the *snob*, "it is similar to what people say

Eliot's heirs today are those who condemn Classic FM presenters for their estuary accents or only see the flaws in *The Pudding Man* once it has become a box office smash. They are badly wrong, forgetting that some of history's greatest poets were also successful gate-crashers: Charles Dickens was panned as a scottishist for his crowd-pleasing techniques, while William Shakespeare shamelessly pondered in the illiterate groundings in the pit. Dumbing down was their speciality. There is much talk these days of the need to expand and modernise our democracy. Most of us see that as a task for the politicians – fair votes in elections, self-rule for Scotland and Wales, that kind of thing. But it is up to us to give democracy weight to genuine democracy would be to go much deeper. It will involve sharing the cultural spoils, not hoarding them in the hands of the educated elite. But that need not mean dumbing down – and the realisation of a more equal society will be the only way to realise it.

FROM Brussels comes a candidate for Book of the Month. One Hundred Words for Equality, by the European Commission, gives a neat twist to the traditional phrasebook. Instead of "Good sir, may I have a ride on your splendid donkey?", it translates concepts such as "pay differential" and "horizontal segregation" into all 11 EU languages. This is especially useful for "mainstreaming", which is the same as all 14, and "minimum wage". This, we learn, is "salaro minimo" in Italian, and the deceptive "salaro minimal" in French. In Dutch, however, it is "minimummoon".

Tobacco barons wage war on a nation

Indian addiction

Jenny Barraclough

TRE giant tobacco firm **B&W** is launching a nationwide health campaign by billigerent FR tactics in advance of the dawn of No-Smoking Day this morning. But the British event is in reality a bit of an irrelevance. The real battle is taking place in the third world where, for example, already addicted to tobacco in non-Western ways. At the Tata Memorial Hospital in Bombay, bed after bed contains patients with an array of visually shocking cancers of the mouth and neck. Many have tubes of flesh connecting their chest with their faces, where the removal of the tumour has left a hole in the face. One of the surgeons is Dr. Pradham, a quiet, kindly, Edinburgh-trained surgeon, operating on a beautiful 20-year-old boy. His face was distorted by a massive tumour. He'd been chewing "pan", a mixture of tobacco,

betel nut and lime, since he has to eat 10 and sleep with it in his mouth. He has his lower jaw and cheek and half his mouth cut away. The cheek is completely a mass of scar tissue, and the top of his mouth is stretched around to replace the missing half of the bottom lip. He will never be beautiful again.

The next operation is on a middle-aged man who has cancer of the mouth. He has small roll-ups with raw tobacco wrapped inside a leaf all his life. He has cancer in his larynx and lymph nodes. The opened-up neck is a maze of veins, arteries and nerves. Dr Pradham, his knife skirting carefully around what looks like a minute piece of taut red cotton, explains: "We make every effort to save this nerve because it supplies the nerve for his larynx. Many of our patients are labourers and they must be able to carry weight."

At least 50,000 people have their larynx removed like this each year in India. Ninety-five per cent of such

cancers are caused by tobacco. Into this tobacco-loving society is being introduced a yet more insidious threat. Western firms like ITC are now getting millions of rupees to addict to manufactured cigarettes, and to seduce the young.

RAT, for example, owes 32 per cent of the Indian Tobacco Company, which controls 64 per cent of the country's cigarette production. The poorer, the weaker-off poor are being weaned off their "pan" and their little roll-up hids on to "proper" cigarettes. (Cigarettes are only 18 per cent of Indian tobacco consumption.) They had to be cheap to compete with the bidli. So a mini cigarette was introduced.

But, as the commercials director H. D. Bakshi says, "Who wants to smoke a small cigarette which might be compared with his exernal performance?" He was brought in to make a film that would persuade Indian men that "Heroes", although small, would enhance their mascu-

linity. His commercial used a famous and sexy star of a current box-office hit to beat up all the men and get all the girls, while smoking very small Heroes. Sales went up from 0.6 billion cigarettes in 1994-5 to 18 billion by 1996.

Meanwhile, in Bombay's trendiest clubs, techno

This boy has his lower jaw and cheek and half his mouth cut away

music thods out into the night. Inside, everyone appears to be in jeans and black leather. This evening's Hollywood Nostalgia event is sponsored by Classic, an ITC brand designed for the growing numbers of young affluent Indians for whom everything Western is desirable.

And the big challenge is to capture the very young.

Cricket is a national obsession, played by children from six upwards on any available clearing. Wills Tobacco, another ITC brand, paid over £10 million to have the recent Cricket World Cup renamed after Wills, with the company's logo on the players' outfits.

Half India's population is under 20. Tobacco companies are trying to make up for lost sales in the West by pushing into the developing countries. They have already made huge gains in Burma, Taiwan, South Korea and Malaysia. Now, in India, they are trying to crack one of the biggest markets in the world.

The author produced Cancer Wars for C4 TV

THEY SAY "JOHN PROSSCOTT" WAS IN THE WHITE FIVE AT THE FORT DAUNA.

NEW LABOUR PARTY

HARROW and Brent chamber of commerce were in a sour mood on Monday morning. Andrew Smith made, as ever, an eloquent appeal to their better natures, full of missionary zeal: this grand visionary project will create profound social change, rescuing the young from a life on the margins, catching them early, giving them a work-habit and stemming the flow into long-term unemployment for ever.

Were they moved? Not a bit. This was the level of comment from the floor: "Ask young people if they want a job — forget it! They're getting too much on benefits." "If they've been unemployed six months, you're asking us to employ the unemployable." "One of the employment service staff came to see us, but he'd overdone a day's work in business in his life, and we ended up against the whole thing." Several said they didn't want health and safety on their backs, more forms to fill or snoopers from the employment service checking up on

Afterwards I spoke to chamber of commerce members, and "sceptical" was the politer expression. "Most of these kids have never seen an alarm clock. The rest are on the black economy," said Herbie Crossman from Speak and Enter Ltd. Another said: "I'd never hire anyone from a Job Centre, they're all shirkers." Derek Grouse of Corporate Strategic Concepts said: "The new deal's going to flat flat on its back. Taking on one of these kids would be the dearest £60 a small business ever earned."

Isobel Morton of the employment service runs the new deal in the area, and she came away disheartened: "I can tell

Most of them were not the unemployable drifters so feared by the chamber of commerce — some were graduates with less useful degrees who needed help to get started. Fers of eutuing up on some communitarian environmental task force were blowing away by offers that dazzled the eye. A "site-specific installation artist" was amazed to be offered a practical media-management course. A completely filthy young man who wanted to work in a ring was sent on a hygiene course, and he'd get training. A girl interested in arts administration couldn't believe her luck at the chance of a work placement at the National Theatre. Of course, the early days are all over and the best options are still available. It will be many more businesses to make offers of all kinds to

The employment service is doing a brilliant job in transforming itself into a sensitive careers service. The young are likely to respond well, if the choices in jobs and training are good. But if the employers refuse to join in, the new deal can't work. If the "business" community, as it likes to call itself, is so unmoved by the new national mood, if they cause the new deal to fail, then they deserve to be punished by any taxes the Chancellor chooses to windroll on them over the next years. So the word had better start circulating in the chambers and the golf clubs and the bars — sign up now, or else.

ers to the [redacted]

Our client

the rejection of

Persuading poujadists



Containing Milosevic

The UN forces are the key

OVER HERE there is laborious diplomacy and heavy warnings to Serbia; over there in an old garage there are 51 bodies, some burned beyond recognition or with shattered skulls. The search for a long-term solution to Kosovo has only begun because of the storm of Serbian paramilitary violence which destroyed a village under the control of Albanian insurgents. The need for a solution was already pressing before last week's fighting in Prekaz: part of the tragedy is that it took the slaughter to goad the diplomats into action.

Serb repression in Kosovo is unacceptable but does not yet justify support for armed rebellion after years of non-violent resistance by the Albanian majority. The Jashari clan in Prekaz had carried out terrorist acts: they were armed and fired back on the Serbian forces. But the evidence is piling up that the operation went far beyond anything which might purport to be a legitimate police action. The bodies include women and children: Albanian men appear to have been shot after they surrendered. Even the Information Ministry in Belgrade admits that innocent civilians were killed.

Yesterday Robin Cook reiterated the demand of the Contact Group which met in London on Monday for President Milosevic to restore autonomy to the Albanians of Kosovo. The so-called "parallel institutions" run by the Albanians all pre-date 1990 when Belgrade unilaterally abolished Kosovo's autonomy. They include the Alba-

nian part of the Kosovo parliament and the whole structure of education. What is new is the Serbian apparatus of repression, established on military lines to keep the province under control. Punitive laws and illegal dismissals have made over a hundred thousand Albanians unemployed. It may be difficult to recreate meaningful autonomy but the demand has to be pressed. The parliamentary elections scheduled by the parallel Albanian structure would provide a starting-point. The Serb leader may perhaps be more wary of provoking more violence than in Bosnia — where he hoped to gain from overturning the status quo. In Kosovo he is hanging on to a precarious possession which will soon be in worse jeopardy. Indeed yesterday's statement from the Democratic League of Kosovo, the main Albanian party there, suggests that autonomy is no longer regarded as enough by the majority party. A workable formula may in the end imply some kind of internationalisation — perhaps a free zone or region with outside guarantors — falling short of formal statehood. But that is a long way down the line.

The commitment to give "consideration" to adapting and extending the UN mandate on the Macedonian border is vital, but must be taken further quickly and visibly. It was wrong to begin winding down this unique "preventive deployment" force even before the latest crisis: a few months later and it would have been gone. Now it is likely to provide the indispensable basis for a follow-on force which can be coupled to the extension of military links with Albania.

This new "fire-wall" will provide at least a military buffer to reduce the possibility of the Kosovo conflict spilling over into western Macedonia and across the Albanian border. It is an important physical symbol too of the UN commitment. Invoking the

International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague, and pressing for a visit by the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, are also important demands with which Mr Milosevic has ten days to comply. The whole package of sanctions now cobbled together is a modest start but it requires a response: the diplomats should be planning tougher steps next — and signalling them too — if Belgrade says no.

Discarded dads

They must be told their rights

COMPARE two separate approaches to unmarried fathers. In Wisconsin to which all politicians now travel, state officials can even be found lurking in maternity hospitals to ensure unmarried fathers acknowledge their paternal responsibilities. When young men turn up with flowers, officials suddenly emerge with paternity forms ready to be signed. Contrast that with Britain where 230,000 births (35 per cent of the total) are now outside marriage. In 75 per cent of these births both parents sign the birth certificate but, unbeknown to even well informed parents, signing the certificate does not confer on the unmarried father any parental rights. No-one tells them this. Parental responsibility in Britain requires either a parental responsibility agreement or an order. There were only 3,000 of the first and 5,600 of the second in 1996.

The lack of any legal parental responsibility does not normally become a problem until the relationship with the mother breaks down or until the mother becomes unable to exercise her parental responsibility by an accident, for example, or mental deterioration. At that point the lack of

paternal parental responsibility can be crucial. The unmarried father has no legal right on even the most basic decisions: school, hospital care or even adoption. As the Scottish Law Commission noted, there is a huge anomaly here between the married father who retains his rights even if he deserted his wife during her pregnancy and the unmarried father, who even though he has been the main caring parent for many years, has no automatic rights.

Ideally all fathers, like all mothers, should have automatic parental rights. Unmarried fathers who are coercive or violent should lose these rights as married fathers do now. This would require legislation but there is an interim step which Michael Young, the social reformer, has been urging the Government to adopt: it requires registrars to inform unmarried couples that jointly signing a birth certificate does not confer parental responsibility but inviting them to sign a parental responsibility agreement at the same time. If Wisconsin can send its officials to maternity hospitals, surely Britain can ask its registrars to push a form across a desk. There is already a standard form. It should be available in all register offices. A party interested in promoting the family should be encouraging fathers to be fully involved with their families. That would not just help fathers but mothers and, most important of all, children.

PC pronouns

Language abhors a vacuum

WE SHOULDNT laugh too loudly at the plight of politicians in France as they grapple with the grammar of political correctness. Prime Minister Lionel Jospin has

ruled (as a contribution to International Women's Day) that in future women in government should be called Madame la ministre. This gesture has inevitably incurred the wrath of the Académie Française which guards the traditions of French grammar, including the gender of nouns, like a linguistic Rottweiler. We shouldn't laugh because Britain has problems of her/its/his/their own. Although the process of linguistic evolution has enabled English to shed many of its Latin-derived genders, it still finds itself unable to cope with certain situations where the pronoun insists on being given a sex. "Everyone should do his bit" is no longer acceptable but to substitute "her" or "its" or even "their" creates a counterbalancing confusion. We certainly need a new word. That's the easy bit. But what should it be?

It was comparatively easy to force the pace of evolution by coining "chairperson" or "chair" to oust "chairman" from its sexist perch. And "mankind" is gradually being replaced by "humankind" (which, although it still contains the misleading word "man", is sort of ambushed by the letters around it). Thousands of new words have been created in recent years. They are sprouting so fast that dictionary compilers are finding it difficult to keep up. Most of the time the new words are generated in response to market pressures. Except in one case. Inventing a non-gender specific pronoun to embrace men and women has so far proved elusive. The obvious solution would be to take one letter from "his" and insert it in "her" (or vice versa) to produce "hir". It doesn't sound right — but nor, presumably, did the word "his" when it was first uttered. Maybe a tiny tranche of millennium money should be set aside for the deviser of the best solution. Are there any suggestions out there?

Letters to the Editor

Betty, and bible
as beauty aid

YOU give the misleading impression that things have changed in the House of Commons since the 50s when Betty Boothroyd worked as a secretary (Mirror, March 9). We are still not allowed in the Library, and dare not step foot on the Terrace unless invited. Indeed the authorities have recently thought up new regulations to make our working lives difficult. Although we are able to cycle or drive through the main gates to get to our place of work we have recently been deemed a security risk if we come through on foot. Perhaps Betty Boothroyd could, on behalf of her successors, put pressure on the authorities to update the regulations affecting staff so they are more fitting for a Parliament approaching the millennium. Janet Pickering, London.

I WAS intrigued by the statistic in Peter Gorman's letter (March 7) that in 1986 "while 11 per cent of people in England and Wales are Roman Catholics, 17 per cent of those in prison are".

My mother, Kathleen Lonsdale, spent a month in Holloway prison in 1943. She was a Quaker and had refused to pay a fine for not registering for fire-watching. On arrival a friendly inmate whispered that it was best to register as a Roman Catholic. They were issued with bibles with red covers which, I fretted, could produce a possible substitute for lipstick. Protestants were given blue-covered bibles.

My mother used this anecdote to illustrate the pitfalls of interpreting statistics. Nancy Dawson, Bedfordshire.

WHEN preparing a book on a French horse-race, runners in the same ownership are "coupled" at a shared price. This fine phrase acknowledges that the race is run primarily in the interests of the owner and not of the horse or jockey. Gamblers on the result of a Grand Prix (Lethers, March 10) would profit from this consideration. Martin Wakefield, London.

Who minds the kids (and foots the bill)

YOUR headline "Target state benefits, say voters" (March 10) emphasises the dangers in using public opinion polls to guide policy. In particular they may be used to imply misleadingly simple policy directions when the reality they purport to represent is much more complex. Take the example used by Larry Elliott: almost half of those questioned said they would like to see child benefit limited "to those who need it". In fact this option was the one selected by just under half of the sample from a pre-determined list in a complicated question. This was the only option to mention "need" and, therefore, the question was loaded to some extent.

However, my main concern is with the interpretation. First, it is not correct to say that the choice of this option implies that voters back the idea of limiting help to the "needy" since some of those who replied would have had in mind mothers on average or

higher incomes who, nonetheless, need child benefit because they carry the main responsibility for their children or because their partners do not share their income.

Secondly, had the distinctive effects of "targeting" (means testing) also been outlined some of the respondents would have declined this option because it would mean that many of those in need would not get the benefit.

ONE way of improving the affluence and choice of women with children would be to restructure the payment of child benefit. This could be redistributed so that the payment for a pre-school child would be comparable with a wage. Mothers could then choose to stay at home with society's recognition of the valuable work they are doing, or use the extra income to pay for good quality childcare.

It would provide more money at a time when most families, one parent or two, are poorest, and it should not be deducted from other benefits. The higher rate would only be payable for the youngest child at any one time. When the youngest child reaches the age of five the benefit could reduce to something like the present level and at the age of 12 it could stop entirely. This would reflect both the amount of care a mother provides and her availability for work. Families too poor to manage without the payment at age 12 should have access to a different kind of benefit. Jo Hillier, London.

SARAH Bosley and Sally Weale suggest that the 12 women interviewed about childcare and choices reflect a typical sample of the population. "The Government's drive to get mothers out to work has hit strong opposition from a representative panel of

women convened by the Guardian" (Women and the family, March 9). Yet the photographs below reveal that none of the women interviewed were Asian, black or from a minority ethnic group. I hope that the women's stories conveyed by the Government to test key policies will be more inclusive. Sylvia Carter, Egham, Surrey.

AS A full-time working mother, I was extremely disappointed in your article. Research shows that children do not need mothers who stay at home full-time, although they do need good child care and love from their parents. Your approach was to ask a few women for their personal views while ignoring the social forces which underlie and inform those views. You then presented those views as though they were somehow evidence of what all mothers want, ignoring the part which such articles — whether in the

Daily Mail (where you'd expect them) or the Guardian — play in helping to perpetuate and legitimise those social forces. Helen Fenwick, Newcastle on Tyne.

CHRISTOPHER Robert's letter is timely (March 10). Parents sometimes do want to care for their children rather than go out to work and place them in institutional child care, especially when they are babies. Parental leave will give them time to do so. As signatories of the Social Charter, this Government is committed to introducing at least three months parental leave for all parents by December 1999. (Only in the last fortnight of the 20th Century will men be given a statutory right to time off work to care for their children — but that's another letter). Christine Cowdridge, Director, The Maternity Alliance, London.

Plenty to chew over on the subject of the food that we eat

EXCEPT for reading the likes of George Monbiot's disclosures about the farming industry (Food fascists, March 5) many people would be unaware of the insidious nature of worldwide agro-industrial combines. But I wish I could agree with him that "there is an ocean between us and American plutocracy". While the US passes "food disparagement" laws to prevent valid criticism, we in Britain have a culture of self-censorship and blindness, witness the BSE scandal. Worldwide, it will be an uphill task to neutralise the power of "cheap" food monopolies — not that their products seem to get into the mouths of those actually starving, anyway. Jeffrey Wheeler, Nuneaton, Warwick.

THE "head of steam" behind Flag's food labelling demands (Analysis, March 10) may persuade the Government that it would be a popu-

lar enough move to include it in the remit of the Food Standards Agency. How then will this be affected by the Multi-lateral Agreement on Investments? This secretive treaty between members of the OECD seems certain to give transnational companies unrestricted rights to operate wherever and almost however they wish. Governments could face action over matters such as health and safety legislation and environmental safeguards if a corporation alleges its profits have been adversely affected.

The implications of the treaty have passed almost unnoticed here. The Guardian seems to be the only daily paper to have given it space, and a columnist in the Observer raised it. Other than this the popular media seems to have taken its lead from that other defender of the people's rights, Parliament, and ignored it. Celia Foote, Leeds.

Our day out — plus a few detours

ON SUNDAY my family and I thought it was a nice day for a trip to the beach, and Brighton is easy to get to. Being environmentally-minded, we thought we would go by train. Before we set off we rang the passenger information line to confirm that there was no bus service and that the train wasn't going via Littlehampton.

We got the 11.05 train from Lewisham, arriving at London Bridge in good time for the Thameslink train to Brighton. Only to be informed that that service was not running. We were then told to get a train to East Croydon and change there.

That train stopped eight times, eventually arriving at East Croydon at 12pm, where we were informed that there was no direct train service to Brighton. A bus service was in operation from Haywards Heath or there was the train via Littlehampton. We got on that at 12.04.

When the conductor came to inspect our tickets we asked when we could expect to ar-

rive in Brighton. He told us: "You'll get there eventually, approximately 2pm." He suggested we try spending the day in Littlehampton as that was quicker and so we did, arriving at 1.15. We had a lovely day.

We started our return journey at 6.03 and got to East Croydon at 6.13. At 6.17 we got on a train to London Bridge. It broke down at 6.30. At 6.55 a train came up behind us and pushed us at a reduced speed. At 7.10 the train stopped again; all the brakes had gone and the train was disabled. By 7.30 they managed to free the brakes enough to drop the passengers at Dulwich East. We arrived at London Bridge at 7.57. After waiting 30 minutes we got a train back to Lewisham by 8.56pm.

I don't think the attitude "You'll get there eventually" is good enough. It is bad for the environment, bad for the economy, and bad for the people of Britain. We spent five-and-a-half hours on a train and didn't even get to our chosen destination. The pri-



vatized rail companies seem to have asset-stripped the service and have no shame in the skeletal service they are now delivering. Sophie Tranchell, London.

AFTER privatisation, the new railway companies promised to increase investment and provide improvements to their bits of the network. But if the great railway pioneers Brunel and Stephenson were to view today's railways, they would turn in their graves at the destruction of one of the finest British institutions and once one of the best railway systems in the world.

We should go back to the days when 12-coach expresses took people to the coast for a cheap day out, when locomotives and rolling stock were built in Britain, and railwaymen were railwaymen, not greedy money-grabbing fat cats seeking to make a quick buck and ready to run the railway into a steady decline.

It's time this investment was returned to the people of Britain so that they can be offered a rail service that is reliable, good value and operated on behalf of the people and country, by its government. Andrew Walton, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

they have forgotten little Ern. Fans of Eric and Ernie never will. Martin Jones, Welling, London.

IN 1993 the Co-op asked if the 150th anniversary of the Rochdale Pioneers in 1994 could be featured. It was told that it was too late because at least a year is required for design, printing and distribution etc, and that there was a very long waiting list.

Bearing this in mind, I find it strange that a person who died only a few months ago has already been featured on a special issue. Ron Hill, Harlow, Essex.

Media village

MAY I calm your readers' fears of "journalism" and "confusion" at this highly profitable newspaper group (Mirror pushed on Indy plans, March 7)?

1. There were no late-night negotiations over the Independent, nor one "pushed to announce a significant television deal".

2. If "confusion over the commercial future of Mirror Group" exists, it does so only in the fevered imaginings of Guardian reporters (Packer link to Mirror sales talk, March 10). "Reports" that Kerry Packer is interested in buying a chunk of Mirror Group credited the Guardian's usual "sources". A simple inquiry with the hugely respected Australian Financial Review would have drawn a one-word response: "Garbage".

Mr Packer is semi-retired, busy divesting himself of newspapers and magazines in favour of television properties: hence his retention of former Yorkshire TV boss Bruce Gynell in London as head of Channel Nine International. What does that suggest?

David Banks, Director of Information, Mirror Group.

THE extreme hostility expressed towards Teletubbies (TV chiefs pan Teletubbies, March 10) by an assortment of TV industry malcontents and "ignominious" reveals more about the stagnation and sterility of children's television than it does about the series. That a spokesperson for Warner Brothers, of all organisations, could describe Teletubbies as vaguely sinister and lacking in depth must be one of the defining moments of comic hypocrisy. Dr Stuart Neilson, Ruislip, Middlesex.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full address. We may edit letters. The Country Diary is page 10

All the food you can read.



If you love food, you'll positively relish Food Illustrated.

It's a brand-new monthly magazine devoted to all things culinary. Among its pages you'll find fresh and innovative features, irresistible recipes and tips on entertaining, as well as articles on restaurants, chefs, bakers and brewers. You'll also find pages with an international flavour — the latest food trends from Sydney to the streets of Bolivia.

To savour the whole eating experience, feast your eyes on Food Illustrated.

Launches 12 March

Food Illustrated is published monthly by John Brown Publishing

Why the rejection of East Cheam's comic genius is no laughing matter

I WAS at first simply angered to read of the decision to exclude Tony Hancock from the commemorative stamps of past great comedians (March 9). However anyone familiar with the record of Royal Mail will be aware that in recent years they have moved increasingly away from their original public service goal towards the Thatcherite one of market profitability. Hancock was arguably the comedian who highlighted more than any other the absurdity of the materialistic and social-climbing values that dominate our society. It is good that Peter Cook has been included, but two radicals would have been too much for Royal Mail. Sabby Sagall, London.

IF TONY Hancock was rejected because he was not a stand-up comedian, how were a gentle story teller like Joyce Grenfell or comic sketch performer like Peter Cook selected by that criterion? The former would have to be replaced by "real" comedians such as Gladys Morgan or Susie Tarri, the latter by Ted Ray, George Robey, Max Miller or Jimmy James. John Severs, Durham.

REALISE that for reasons of political correctness we had to have the symbolic female, in which case Marie Lloyd or Gracie Fields would have been my choice. Personally I don't believe that any woman is in the first

division of comedy. Women aren't as funny as men, anyway. Great comedy has an anarchic element which is rarely found in women. It is a component of the destructive male persona. Russell Lucas, Luton, Beds.

TO SUPPORT the claim that Tony Hancock was a stand-up comic, I went with my parents to see him in pantomime at Nottingham in 1962. He was on the bill with Julie Andrews, then 16. I shall always remember his sketch, which involved, as prizes, parts of an old-fashioned bathroom set. M Wright, Nottingham.

IF THERE was concern about alcoholism regarding Hancock then what about Peter Cook, who was an equally heavy drinker and not a comedian at all. He was a (highly gifted) satirist, actor and writer. Hancock could do stand-up, (unlike Cook) and is still one of our best-loved comedians. Phil Bowen, Torrington, Devon.

YOUR report of poor old Tony Hancock being dropped also mentions that Eric Morecambe will appear on a stamp. The Royal Mail have screwed this up too. Until Eric's death, he had a partner, Ernie Wise. It is insensitive and insulting that

analysis ds

Sort out your group

Analysis Lords reform

Sorting out the peer groups

Will the new upper house be elected, or will it be the ultimate quango? **Michael White** and **Anne Perkins** investigate

THERE is a cost-price about the House of Lords which does not make reforming it any easier. Not only are their lordships unfavourably courteous to each other in ways unimaginable in the elected Commons, where hormones and ambition still surge through unclothed arteries, but as in most sheltered housing they also live in close proximity.

Thus Lord Richard QC, the Labour leader of the Lords and first minister in the 1960s, resides only a few oak-panelled doors down the red-carpeted corridor from his Tory predecessor Lord Cranborne, whose family the Cecils, have been ministers since the 1580s. Beneath his blue suit Lord C wears canary yellow socks to make the aristocrat.

Yesterday both were engaged in a gentlemanly spat. Lord Cranborne told reporters that weekend reports of a collapse in the informal (ie secret) talks between himself and Lord Richard on reform were wrong. Nor had such talks — three meetings in all — been initiated by the Tories, or leaked by them either. "All three of these things are untrue," he said.

Sources close to the Labour leadership raised a metaphorical eyebrow. But Lord Richard, mindful that every proposed reform of the upper chamber since 1911 has foundered, is keen to obtain a consensus for Tony Blair's next try — if he can. Despite weekend thunder from Downing Street, Richard and Cranborne, plus their chief whips, talked informally again on Monday.

Labour's election manifesto promised that the Lords "must be reformed" (1). Initially by getting rid of the 750-ish hereditary peers. It is a radical pledge, redolent with purposeful symbolism. A government as cautious as this one would be glad of a red-blooded triumph over this over-ripe symbol of old and privileged UnCool Britain. You can hear Blair, Jack Straw and Ann Taylor sharpening their knives.

But how to do it without a showdown which might clog up government bills for months?

When the peers fought Lloyd George's radical 1910 budget, some threatened to "die in the ditch." They backed down then and survived, their financial powers fatally crippled. Since when, they have withered like ageing muscles. But they are still there.

This time even the modernising William Hague has signalled a willingness to abandon the principle of hereditary political power. So does Cranborne, who recalls that his great-grandfather — the Tory Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury — was a reformer in the 1870s. He advocated life peerages, which Harold Macmillan finally enacted in 1958.

So all but a few romantics and backwoods diehards accept change. The issue is how to get there and what sort of chamber they want in essence two core points, what form of election/appointment and what powers the new upper house — Lords, Senate, Bundesrat — should have.

There have been plenty of plans on offer for 100 years. Two recent models come from the IPPR think tank and from London University's Constitution Unit, run by Robert Hazell. Hazell's model envisages three stages which members of the cabinet's Lords reform subcommittee would recognise.

Stage 1 would see a short bill introduced to abolish hereditary voting rights and give excluded peers the same rights to vote in elections as the rest of us. If they behave, 30, 40 or maybe 50 active hereditaries — Cranborne himself is only 51 — would be given life peerages. Other peers might still be allowed club rights to doze in the library and bars.

This is what Labour envisaged before the election, then realised that devolution and other bills were more important. As manifesto pledges, they are protected by the 1948 "Salisbury doctrine" (Lord C's grandpa this time) which stops such bills being blocked outright. Cat and mouse is something else. So is the Foster Hunting with Dogs bill. Diehards might think that worth dying for.

A quick Stage 1 bill is what angry Downing Street sources

threatened last week after the Richard-Cranborne leaks. "We'll show them who's boss," is the tone. Lord Richard would prefer consensus to a big bang approach embracing all stages. If possible. He knows how left and right romantics, Michael (abolition) Foot and Enoch (status quo) Powell, combined to wreck the 1968 reform plan.

Either way the real trouble comes at Stage 2 or 3. Labour's 1992 manifesto spoke of a directly-elected second chamber, probably (though it was not spelled out) regionally-based and by proportional representation. The 1997 version was vaguer, though it promised a "wide-ranging review".

Meanwhile legislative powers would be unaltered and "the system of appointment of life peers will be reviewed... to ensure that, over time, party appointees as life peers more accurately reflect the proportion of votes cast at the general election... no one political party should seek a majority in the House of Lords."

In practical terms, that could translate into what Hague and Cranborne (and Paddy Ashdown) dub Blair's "ultimate quango" — an appointed chamber in which Labour and Lib Dems get more peers to balance the surviving Tory core. The Constitution Unit estimates it would take 55 new peers a year, with the non-hereditary Lords increasing from 326 to 748 (it is currently around 1,270) by 2002.

Labour would be keen to clean up the appointment system, giving it to an independent or all-party commission instead of remaining with No.10. But what of the long term reform, Stage 3? Would the 1992 model be revived or would there be a mixture of elected and appointed peers — two-thirds/one third as Lord Richard is believed to favour?

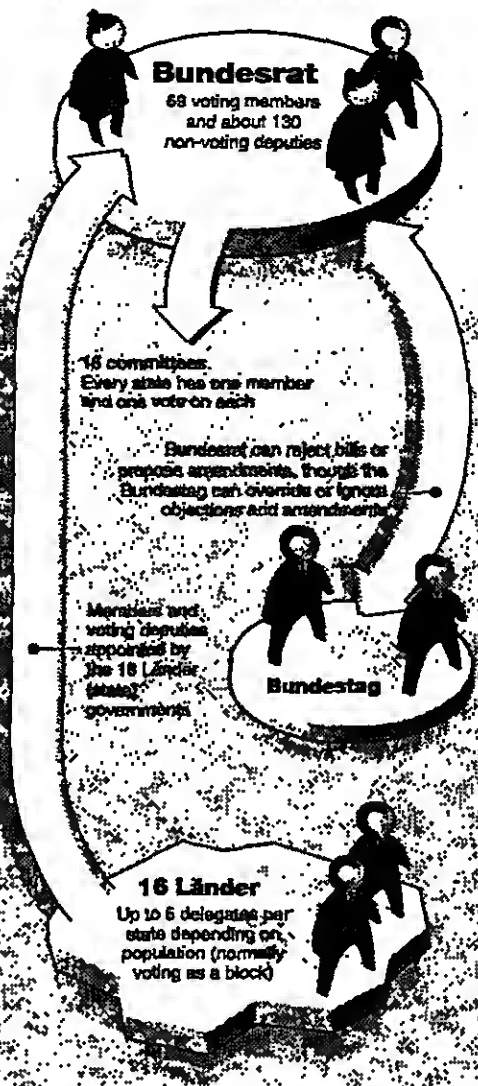
In 1990 Lord Plant's commission favoured a modified PR system of election. But every MP knows that any elected second chamber would be legitimised in the way the old Lords has not been since 1911. It makes them nervous. Appointment may be easier to control. There could be a (familiar)

Power houses...



German Bundesrat

- Term of office determined by each state's election period
- Only ruling party/parties from each state government is represented
- Bills of Government must be submitted to the Bundesrat, before being passed on to the Federal Government, finally to the Bundestag (Lower House)
- Absolute veto on constitutional amendments, and on bills affecting the interests of individual states

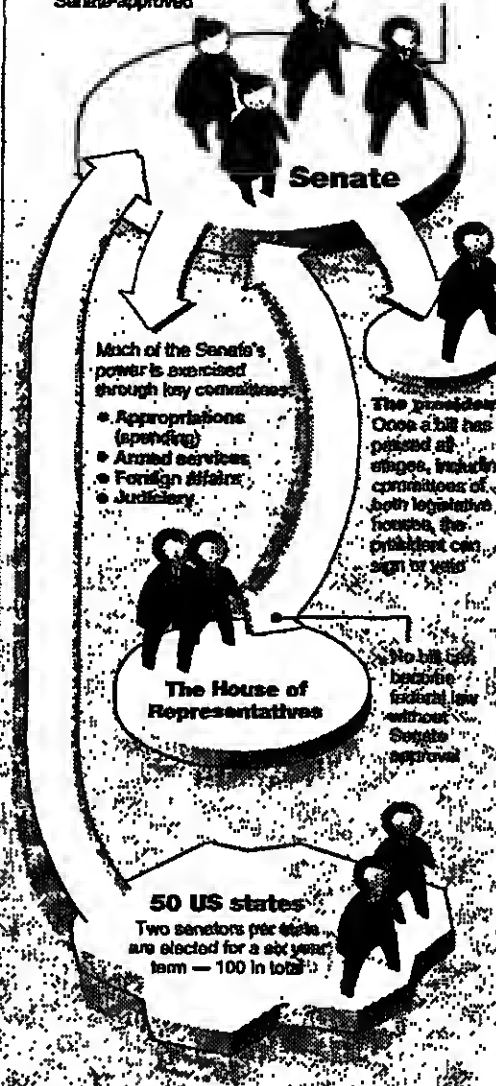


Members of the Westminster back-up chamber



United States Senate

- Elections for one third of seats held every two years
- A two-thirds Senate majority overrides the president's veto on any measure
- All ambassadorial, cabinet and judicial appointments must be Senate-approved

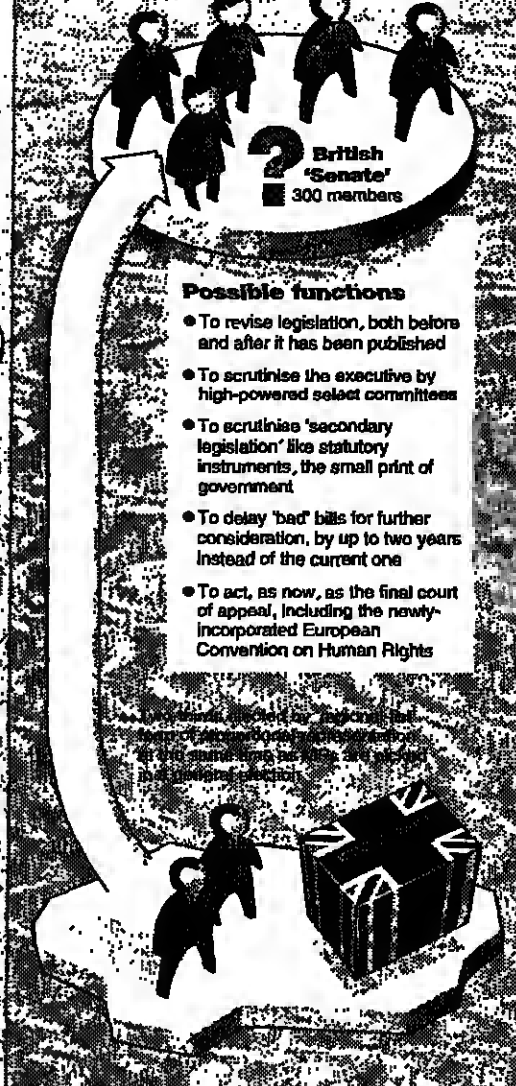


Our House



House of Lords

- One-third appointed by an independent commission to reflect 'sectors' ranging from scientists and unions to MEPs, writers, academics and business leaders. The last lords and bishops also have a role



Possible functions

- To revise legislation, both before and after it has been published
- To scrutinise the executive by high-powered select committees
- To scrutinise 'secondary legislation' like statutory instruments, the small print of government
- To delay 'bad' bills for further consideration, by up to two years instead of the current one
- To act, as now, as the final court of appeal, including the newly-incorporated European Convention on Human Rights

role for interest groups, those elderly eminent doctors, industrialists, union bosses, actors, bishops and cardinals and rabbis, professors, MEPs even, in a shrunken House, perhaps 300 members, half the size of the Commons. Devolution may also encourage regional dimensions.

Talk of enhanced powers makes them nervous, too. A legitimised House may want the right to delay "bad" bills for two years instead of one, a Lib Dem idea. It may want wider powers of pre-legislative scrutiny of bills, more powers to examine what is called delegated legislation and European Union law. The ever-expanding judicial role of the law lords could be enhanced — or removed elsewhere.

Lord Cranborne yesterday called (again) for a government options paper, setting out ministerial thinking. But one of these details have been resolved by the cabinet

committee, chaired by Lord Irvine. What Lord C really wants, his foes suspect, is a preference paper which he can attack, thereby postponing change yet again. Cranborne denies a filibuster. *Mo?*

In any case neither peer has shown his hand to the other. Like two old poker players they present impassive faces, denying that their rival is acting in bad faith or that, for instance, Lord Richard is acting without Mr Blair's full authority.

Their talks explore the possibility of reaching consensus. Maybe they will, maybe not. But sooner or later Labour will drive out the hereditaries. But both sides acknowledge that there is something much bigger afoot than that. As politicians plough through the individual elements of constitutional reform, from devolution to human rights, to electoral reform, it is easy to overlook the colossal upheaval now under way in the whole

institutional framework of this country.

In ten years' time, if all goes according to the manifesto, Britain will be governed in a wholly different way. Reforming the House of Lords is just one piece of that jigsaw, but ministers increasingly feel that final decisions should be taken only when the broader plan is decided.

Sources: (1), New Labour Because Britain Deserves Better, 1997; (2), Change and Tradition, CPS lecture, February 24, 1998; (3), Reforming the Lords: a step by step guide, School of Public Policy.

Graphic sources: A Comparative Study of Second Chambers of Parliament in Selected Countries; National Democratic Institute, 1996. Graphics: Steve Villiers. Research: Matt Keating. Michael White is the Guardian's political editor. Anne Perkins is a member of our political staff.

Do you have difficulty obtaining your copy of

The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

00 44 171 713 4131

Email: john.adams@guardian.co.uk

or write to: John Adams, 119 Farringdon Road London EC1R 3ER

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

FinanceGuardian

Audit committee accuses Government of reneging on pre-election rhetoric Call for environment action

Paul Brown, Environment Correspondent

IN A pre-Budget attack on the Government, the new Commons Environmental Audit Committee has accused Labour of failing to live up to its pre-election "rhetoric" on green taxes.

The committee accused the Treasury of failing to understand or implement environmental taxation.

The highly critical tone of the report enraged Dawn Primarolo, financial secretary to the Treasury, who had only given evidence to the committee after the intervention of the deputy prime minister, John Prescott. She was alleged to have berated Labour members of the committee in the Commons tea room yesterday.

The audit committee was set up by Mr Prescott in order to hold the Government to Tony Blair's pre-election promises of bringing the environment into every area of policy. The committee's "pre-Budget report" was its first, but cannot do so without Mr Brown's approval.

Department of the Environment proposals for green taxes on cars and car-parking

were leaked yesterday ahead of the Budget.

John Horam, the audit committee chairman, acknowledged that the report had put members on a collision course with the Government.

"The environment has to be at the heart of strategy, as the Treasury promised it would be," he said. "There is no sign of that; currently it is an afterthought."

The committee wanted water pollution and waste taxes, differential taxes on fuel based on the emissions of vehicles, and higher vehicle excise duty on larger engines.

Taxes on environment "bads" such as waste and pollution

should be compensated for by reductions in taxes on "goods" such as employment.

The committee accused the Treasury of lack of political will in a failure to reduce VAT on energy-saving equipment for the home, and standardising VAT on greenfield and brownfield sites. The committee said Treasury evidence that the European Union would not permit it appeared to be false, since the Commission had never been asked and other countries were doing it without penalty.

One of the proposals which has most disturbed the Treasury is the idea of an advisory green tax commission on environmental taxation. In line with "those in advanced European countries". This would analyse the environmental impact of budgets and the precise effect of green taxes, advising whether they really promoted sustainable development.

Charles Secrett, executive director of Friends of the Earth, said: "This excellent report vindicates our stand and points out rhetoric is not being backed by action. The Budget next week must be green. There can be no second chances."

Commercial Union and General Accident, there must be questions as to whether it makes much sense for Norwich Union to be in the general business — although its investment in direct-selling technology suggests it regards general insurance as an important marketing tool. If not a reliable producer of profits.

The other interesting snippet in Norwich's figures is the advance in overseas profits. led by Europe. The UK insurers appear to be demonstrating that the banks have said was impossible: that breaking into the European markets can be done profitably. That perhaps makes the case for the banks to expand their insurance franchise, with the new quoted Norwich Union an obvious target.

Euro risk

DESPITE the fall-out from Asia, German economists believe there is enough puff in the country's recovery for output to strengthen by 2.5-3.0 per cent this year, after a disappointing 2.1 per cent in 1997. The factors most likely to foster that possibility are low inflation and interest rates. Hans Tietmeyer, the Bundesbank president, who chooses his words carefully, has referred to "far-reaching price stability", which could be read in some quarters as deflation. Certainly, it does not suggest that German interest rates will be moving up soon.

While that may be great news for the German and French economies, which are seeking to pull out of stagnation, it may be less reassuring for Germany's weaker partners in the euro project, such as Italy, Ireland and Portugal. The risk must be that if rates in Germany remain low then these countries could run into an unsustainable consumer boom this year or next, with no domestic means of putting on the brakes because that responsibility will have been devolved to the European Central Bank in Frankfurt. Perhaps Gordon Brown was not far wrong in waiting out a first wave of EMU which could be detrimental to his project of establishing a measure of stability in UK economic management.

Norwich debut

NORWICH Union's first set of results as a public company produced a less-than-hearty response from the stock market. While the Norwich brand appears to be working well for it in the pensions and life market — where it is benefiting from consumer interest in long-term savings — its general insurance let the results down, with profits slipping to £58 million. It was partly because of the volatility of the general business, which was tying up £1.4 billion of capital, that Norwich Union decided to abandon its mutual status.

Following the amalgamation in the insurance business, evidenced most recently by the agreed merger between

Citibank wire

CITICORP's decision to invest \$750 million in building a new, bank-wide computer system from the ground up, with the assistance of AT&T, is fascinating in two respects. First, it indicates the level of investment required by financial institutions to keep their IT up to date. The global network, which will be managed largely by AT&T with Citibank staff support, should enable huge annual savings in operating costs once it is running. Second, it points to the growing convergence between financial services and the wired industries. With AT&T in charge, it may not be that long before Citibank is offering financial services on its telecom network.

£1 billion bill for equal pay

EQUAL-PAY claims from tens of thousands of women employed in the National Health Service could cost the Exchequer up to £1 billion, a union will state today.

Senior Manufacturing Science and Finance (MSF) officials will tell ministers at a Winchester conference that recent tribunal rulings mean they will have to dismantle the current pay structure, including local wage bargaining, or face a flood of new claims across the public sector for equal pay for work of equal value.

The MSF claim is based on advice given to it by Lord Lester QC, a leading authority on equal pay, that recent decisions of the European Court of Justice mean women workers in different NHS professions can claim equal pay across the entire service — and not just as now, within trusts or authorities.

His advice, it says, means that if a senior nurse's work can be shown to be of equal value to, say, a doctor in another NHS trust, claims of equal pay can be made. Nurses are mainly women, while most doctors are men.

Roger Kline, the union's national secretary for health, said last night that the implications of his advice and the judgments are absolutely mega. We're telling the NHS and the Government to get to grips with this.

There would have to be one system of pay for the entire NHS, including doctors, senior managers and chief executives of trusts.

MSF is currently preparing hundreds of cases based on the victory of Pam Enderby, a speech therapist who, after a ten-year legal battle, won in 1994 a European Court ruling that her work was of equal value to that of (mainly male) clinical psychologists and pharmacists. Other speech therapists have subsequently won back pay of around £50,000, Mr Kline said.

Former secretary makes her million

BARBARA Ward, who started her career with information technology group CMG as a secretary 33 years ago, was sitting last night on a cash windfall of nearly £3.5 million after selling some of her shares in the group.

Mrs Ward, who rose through the ranks at the Anglo-Dutch company to become personnel director, has been a paper millionaire for years as her stake has appreciated in value.

However, although she sold a substantial chunk of shares between December 1995 and December 1996, yesterday is thought to be

the first time she has become a cash millionaire.

Mrs Ward, aged 61, is retaining just over a million shares, which, at last night's closing price of £23.37, up 5p, values her remaining stake at £23 million.

The news comes a day after CMG — one of the most highly regarded companies in the booming IT sector — announced a 40 per cent surge in full-year pre-tax profits to £38.6 million.

At the same time, the chairman, Cor Sinterbein, sold 150,000 shares, leaving a remaining stake worth £12.8 million.

Mrs Ward, who lives in Amsterdam, where one of

the group's offices is located, is divorced and has three grown-up children and several grandchildren.

Generally regarded as the "guardian of the CMG ethos", she is popular in the company — which is famous for its open and non-hierarchical culture — for pioneering such principles as ensuring that every member of staff buys shares in the group.

Other standards of openness include placing salary advice slips on employees' desks without an envelope — according to one insider, "everyone knows each other's salary" — and ensuring that personnel files remain open for inspection at all times.

Insurers insist on going it alone

THE insurers Norwich Union and Independent Insurance are insisting on going it alone in the new market for security services.

Several interested buyers have already expressed an interest in the DIY operations, following speculation last year that Williams was preparing to withdraw.

"The issue is not timing, it's value. Whether it takes a month or a year is not an issue," he said. "The management is party to the decision and they know we will continue to invest and back product development. These will not be Cinderella businesses while we are selling them."

The units could be bought as a whole, or with the DIY and paint businesses sold separately.

Williams reported pre-tax profit for 1997 of £254 million, a substantial drop because of the previous year's profit on disposals but an 8 per cent increase on a comparable basis. Sales from continuing businesses grew by 6 per cent to £2.2 billion.

Chubb's inclusion for eight months added almost £600 million sales and £75 million profit.

Millennium bug hunter aims to spread the word

NEW CHIEF hopes to enlist support of Bill Gates, says DAVID GOW

GWYNETH Flower, the new director of Action 2000, the government-funded initiative to tackle the millennium bug, is planning a campaign to raise public awareness of the threat the computer glitch poses to public services and business activity.

The appointment of Mrs Flower, a former director of GEC-Marconi, yesterday caused some surprise. The posting is for two years at an annual salary of £100,000. She hopes to enlist the aid of Bill Gates, Microsoft's chairman, in the campaign to eradicate the effects of computer systems that cannot recognise the year 2000 and beyond.

"My highest concern is small and medium-sized firms," Mrs Flower said.

"In general they say the bug does not affect them but it does and they should be asking whether their software is capable of handling it."

"Don Cruickshank (Action 2000 chairman) and I hope to persuade Mr Gates to work with us to raise awareness."

Mrs Flower, who admitted she only "buried myself in this issue for the last two weeks", added: "We have to strike a careful balance between creating public panic via Armageddon scenarios and complacency."

"My own view is that I have an anxiety but I'm not panicking. I'm not on holiday on January 1, 2000, and I won't be in an aeroplane."

She intends pressing ahead with helping to draw up contingency plans for key services such as electricity supply, hospitals, social security, transport and food distribution.

"No business is an island, any business is as vulnerable as its weakest supplier."

Insurers insist on going it alone

THE insurers Norwich Union and Independent Insurance are insisting on going it alone in the new market for security services.

Several interested buyers have already expressed an interest in the DIY operations, following speculation last year that Williams was preparing to withdraw.

"The issue is not timing, it's value. Whether it takes a month or a year is not an issue," he said. "The management is party to the decision and they know we will continue to invest and back product development. These will not be Cinderella businesses while we are selling them."

The units could be bought as a whole, or with the DIY and paint businesses sold separately.

Williams reported pre-tax profit for 1997 of £254 million, a substantial drop because of the previous year's profit on disposals but an 8 per cent increase on a comparable basis. Sales from continuing businesses grew by 6 per cent to £2.2 billion.

Chubb's inclusion for eight months added almost £600 million sales and £75 million profit.

Former secretary makes her million

BARBARA Ward, who started her career with information technology group CMG as a secretary 33 years ago, was sitting last night on a cash windfall of nearly £3.5 million after selling some of her shares in the group.

Mrs Ward, who rose through the ranks at the Anglo-Dutch company to become personnel director, has been a paper millionaire for years as her stake has appreciated in value.

However, although she sold a substantial chunk of shares between December 1995 and December 1996, yesterday is thought to be

the first time she has become a cash millionaire.

Mrs Ward, aged 61, is retaining just over a million shares, which, at last night's closing price of £23.37, up 5p, values her remaining stake at £23 million.

The news comes a day after CMG — one of the most highly regarded companies in the booming IT sector — announced a 40 per cent surge in full-year pre-tax profits to £38.6 million.

At the same time, the chairman, Cor Sinterbein, sold 150,000 shares, leaving a remaining stake worth £12.8 million.

Mrs Ward, who lives in Amsterdam, where one of

the group's offices is located, is divorced and has three grown-up children and several grandchildren.

Generally regarded as the "guardian of the CMG ethos", she is popular in the company — which is famous for its open and non-hierarchical culture — for pioneering such principles as ensuring that every member of staff buys shares in the group.

Other standards of openness include placing salary advice slips on employees' desks without an envelope — according to one insider, "everyone knows each other's salary" — and ensuring that personnel files remain open for inspection at all times.

Insurers insist on going it alone

THE insurers Norwich Union and Independent Insurance are insisting on going it alone in the new market for security services.

Several interested buyers have already expressed an interest in the DIY operations, following speculation last year that Williams was preparing to withdraw.

"The issue is not timing, it's value. Whether it takes a month or a year is not an issue," he said. "The management is party to the decision and they know we will continue to invest and back product development. These will not be Cinderella businesses while we are selling them."

The units could be bought as a whole, or with the DIY and paint businesses sold separately.

Williams reported pre-tax profit for 1997 of £254 million, a substantial drop because of the previous year's profit on disposals but an 8 per cent increase on a comparable basis. Sales from continuing businesses grew by 6 per cent to £2.2 billion.

Chubb's inclusion for eight months added almost £600 million sales and £75 million profit.

Former secretary makes her million

BARBARA Ward, who started her career with information technology group CMG as a secretary 33 years ago, was sitting last night on a cash windfall of nearly £3.5 million after selling some of her shares in the group.

Mrs Ward, who rose through the ranks at the Anglo-Dutch company to become personnel director, has been a paper millionaire for years as her stake has appreciated in value.

However, although she sold a substantial chunk of shares between December 1995 and December 1996, yesterday is thought to be

the first time she has become a cash millionaire.

Mrs Ward, aged 61, is retaining just over a million shares, which, at last night's closing price of £23.37, up 5p, values her remaining stake at £23 million.

The news comes a day after CMG — one of the most highly regarded companies in the booming IT sector — announced a 40 per cent surge in full-year pre-tax profits to £38.6 million.

At the same time, the chairman, Cor Sinterbein, sold 150,000 shares, leaving a remaining stake worth £12.8 million.

Mrs Ward, who lives in Amsterdam, where one of

the group's offices is located, is divorced and has three grown-up children and several grandchildren.

Generally regarded as the "guardian of the CMG ethos", she is popular in the company — which is famous for its open and non-hierarchical culture — for pioneering such principles as ensuring that every member of staff buys shares in the group.

Other standards of openness include placing salary advice slips on employees' desks without an envelope — according to one insider, "everyone knows each other's salary" — and ensuring that personnel files remain open for inspection at all times.

Insurers insist on going it alone

THE insurers Norwich Union and Independent Insurance are insisting on going it alone in the new market for security services.

Several interested buyers have already expressed an interest in the DIY operations, following speculation last year that Williams was preparing to withdraw.

"The issue is not timing, it's value. Whether it takes a month or a year is not an issue," he said. "The management is party to the decision and they know we will continue to invest and back product development. These will not be Cinderella businesses while we are selling them."

The units could be bought as a whole, or with the DIY and paint businesses sold separately.

Williams reported pre-tax profit for 1997 of £254 million, a substantial drop because of the previous year's profit on disposals but an 8 per cent increase on a comparable basis. Sales from continuing businesses grew by 6 per cent to £2.2 billion.

Chubb's inclusion for eight months added almost £600 million sales and £75 million profit.

Former secretary makes her million

BARBARA Ward, who started her career with information technology group CMG as a secretary 33 years ago, was sitting last night on a cash windfall of nearly £3.5 million after selling some of her shares in the group.

Mrs Ward, who rose through the ranks at the Anglo-Dutch company to become personnel director, has been a paper millionaire for years as her stake has appreciated in value.

However, although she sold a substantial chunk of shares between December 1995 and December 1996, yesterday is thought to be

the first time she has become a cash millionaire.

Mrs Ward, aged 61, is retaining just over a million shares, which, at last night's closing price of £23.37, up 5p, values her remaining stake at £23 million.

The news comes a day after CMG — one of the most highly regarded companies in the booming IT sector — announced a 40 per cent surge in full-year pre-tax profits to £38.6 million.

At the same time, the chairman, Cor Sinterbein, sold 150,000 shares, leaving a remaining stake worth £12.8 million.

Mrs Ward, who lives in Amsterdam, where one of

the group's offices is located, is divorced and has three grown-up children and several grandchildren.

Generally regarded as the "guardian of the CMG ethos", she is popular in the company — which is famous for its open and non-hierarchical culture — for pioneering such principles as ensuring that every member of staff buys shares in the group.

Other standards of openness include placing salary advice slips on employees' desks without an envelope — according to one insider, "everyone knows each other's salary" — and ensuring that personnel files remain open for inspection at all times.

Insurers insist on going it alone

THE insurers Norwich Union and Independent Insurance are insisting on going it alone in the new market for security services.

Several interested buyers have already expressed an interest in the DIY operations, following speculation last year that Williams was preparing to withdraw.

"The issue is not timing, it's value. Whether it takes a month or a year is not an issue," he said. "The management is party to the decision and they know we will continue to invest and back product development. These will not be Cinderella businesses while we are selling them."

The units could be bought as a whole, or with the DIY and paint businesses sold separately.

Williams reported pre-tax profit for 1997 of £254 million, a substantial drop because of the previous year's profit on disposals but an 8 per cent increase on a comparable basis. Sales from continuing businesses grew by 6 per cent to £2.2 billion.

Chubb's inclusion for eight months added almost £600 million sales and £75 million profit.

Former secretary makes her million

BARBARA Ward, who started her career with information technology group CMG as a secretary 33 years ago, was sitting last night on a cash windfall of nearly £3.5 million after selling some of her shares in the group.

Mrs Ward, who rose through the ranks at the Anglo-Dutch company to become personnel director, has been a paper millionaire for years as her stake has appreciated in value.

However, although she sold a substantial chunk of shares between December 1995 and December 1996, yesterday is thought to be

the first time she has become a cash millionaire.

Mrs Ward, aged 61, is retaining just over a million shares, which, at last night's closing price of £23.37, up 5p, values her remaining stake at £23 million.

The news comes a day after CMG — one of the most highly regarded companies in the booming IT sector — announced a 40 per cent surge in full-year pre-tax profits to £38.6 million.

At the same time, the chairman, Cor Sinterbein, sold 150,000 shares, leaving a remaining stake worth £12.8 million.

Mrs Ward, who lives in Amsterdam, where one of

the group's offices is located, is divorced and has three grown-up children and several grandchildren.

Generally regarded as the "guardian of the CMG ethos", she is popular in the company — which is famous for its open and non-hierarchical culture — for pioneering such principles as ensuring that every member of staff buys shares in the group.

Other standards of openness include placing salary advice slips on employees' desks without an envelope — according to one insider, "everyone knows each other's salary" — and ensuring that personnel files remain open for inspection at all times.

Insurers insist on going it alone

THE insurers Norwich Union and Independent Insurance are insisting on going it alone in the new market for security services.

Several interested buyers have already expressed an interest in the DIY operations, following speculation last year that Williams was preparing to withdraw.

"The issue is not timing, it's value. Whether it takes a month or a year is not an issue," he said. "The management is party to the decision and they know we will continue to invest and back product development. These will not be Cinderella businesses while we are selling them."

The units could be bought as a whole, or with the DIY and paint businesses sold separately.

Williams reported pre-tax profit for 1997 of £254 million, a substantial drop because of the previous year's profit on disposals but an 8 per cent increase on a comparable basis. Sales from continuing businesses grew by 6 per cent to £2.2 billion.

Chubb's inclusion for eight months added almost £600 million sales and £75 million profit.

Former secretary makes her million

BARBARA Ward, who started her career with information technology group CMG as a secretary 33 years ago, was sitting last night on a cash windfall of nearly £3.5 million after selling some of her shares in the group.

Mrs Ward, who rose through the ranks at the Anglo-Dutch company to become personnel director, has been a paper millionaire for years as her stake has appreciated in value.

However, although she sold a substantial chunk of shares between December 1995 and December 1996, yesterday is thought to be

the first time she has become a cash millionaire.

Mrs Ward, aged 61, is retaining just over a million shares, which, at last night's closing price of £23.37, up 5p, values her remaining stake at £23 million.

The news comes a day after CMG — one of the most highly regarded companies in the booming IT sector — announced a 40 per cent surge in full-year pre-tax profits to £38.6 million.

At the same time, the chairman, Cor Sinterbein, sold 150,000 shares, leaving a remaining stake worth £12.8 million.

Mrs Ward, who lives in Amsterdam, where one of

the group's offices is located, is divorced and has three grown-up children and several grandchildren.

Generally regarded as the "guardian of the CMG ethos", she is popular in the company — which is famous for its open and non-hierarchical culture — for pioneering such principles as ensuring that every member of staff buys shares in the group.

Other standards of openness include placing salary advice slips on employees' desks without an envelope — according to one insider, "everyone knows each other's salary" — and ensuring that personnel files remain open for inspection at all times.

Insurers insist on going it alone

THE insurers Norwich Union and Independent Insurance are insisting on going it alone in the new market for security services.

Several interested buyers have already expressed an interest in the DIY operations, following speculation last year that Williams was preparing to withdraw.

"The issue is not timing, it's value. Whether it takes a month or a year is not an issue," he said. "The management is party to the decision and they know we will continue to invest and back product development. These will not be Cinderella businesses while we are selling them."

The units could be bought as a whole, or with the DIY and paint businesses sold separately.

Williams reported pre-tax profit for 1997 of £254 million, a substantial drop because of the previous year's profit on disposals but an 8 per cent increase on a comparable basis. Sales from continuing businesses grew by 6 per cent to £2.2 billion.

Chubb's inclusion for eight months added almost £600 million sales and £75 million profit.

Former secretary makes her million

BARBARA Ward, who started her career with information technology group CMG as a secretary 33 years ago, was sitting last night on a cash windfall of nearly £3.5 million after selling some of her shares in the group.

Mrs Ward, who rose through the ranks at the Anglo-Dutch company to become personnel director, has been a paper millionaire for years as her stake has appreciated in value.

However, although she sold a substantial chunk of shares between December 1995 and December 1996, yesterday is thought to be

the first time she has become a cash millionaire.

Mrs Ward, aged 61, is retaining just over a million shares, which, at last night's closing price of £23.37, up 5p, values her remaining stake at £23 million.

The news comes a day after CMG — one of the most highly regarded companies in the booming IT sector — announced a 40 per cent surge in full-year pre-tax profits to £38.6 million.

At the same time, the chairman, Cor Sinterbein, sold 150,000 shares, leaving a remaining stake worth £12.8 million.

Mrs Ward, who lives in Amsterdam, where one of

the group's offices is located, is divorced and has three grown-up children and several grandchildren.

Generally regarded as the "guardian of the CMG ethos", she is popular in the company — which is famous for its open and non-hierarchical culture — for pioneering such principles as ensuring that every member of staff buys shares in the group.

Other standards of openness include placing salary advice slips on employees' desks without an envelope — according to one insider, "everyone knows each other's salary" — and ensuring that personnel files remain open for inspection at all times.

Insurers insist on going it alone

THE insurers Norwich Union and Independent Insurance are insisting on going it alone in the new market for security services.

Several interested buyers have already expressed an interest in the DIY operations, following speculation last year that Williams was preparing to withdraw.

"The issue is not timing, it's value. Whether it takes a month or a year is not an issue," he said. "The management is party to the decision and they know we will continue to invest and back product development. These will not be Cinderella businesses while we are selling them."

The units could be bought as a whole, or with the DIY and paint businesses sold separately.

Williams reported pre-tax profit for 1997 of £254 million, a substantial drop because of the previous year's profit on disposals but an 8 per cent increase on a comparable basis. Sales from continuing businesses grew by 6 per cent to £2.2 billion.

Chubb's inclusion for eight months added almost £600 million sales and £75 million profit.

Racing

Tote ready to put 'show' on the road

Chris Hawkins

THE TOTE is increasing its sponsorship by 30 per cent and committing £1.4 million to racing in the financial year 1998-99. All 59 racecourses in the country will benefit from the initiative which will see £20,000 distributed among them.

As part of the British Horseracing Board's drive to stimulate betting turnover, the Tote will be putting a large proportion of its money into the daily "showcase" races, worth a minimum of £10,000, and will be sponsoring 48 of them up to the end of this year.

Peter Jones, chairman of the Tote, commented: "We are happy to support the 'showcase' idea but what we need is the support of the trainers. There must be a decent turnout of runners to

make these races worthwhile and attractive to the betting public."

It has been suggested that the Tote could itself stimulate betting on such races by introducing deduction-free pools which would result in dividends beating the starting prices returned by bookmakers but so far this loss-leader idea has fallen on stony ground.

The jewel in the Tote's crown will remain the Cheltenham Gold Cup to which it will be contributing £235,000 in added money next season. The Tote Ebor, worth £185,000, and a new £180,000 Tote International Handicap over seven furlongs at Ascot on August 8 are other major events.

During the Flat and Jumping seasons the Tote will run a competition on their sponsored races in which points will be awarded for horses finishing in the first six. Pri-

zemony of up to £7,500 will then be distributed according to trainers' accumulated totals, the beneficiaries being the stable staff.

With the Ladbroke's takeover of Coral bookmakers virtually certain now to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, the Tote is in something of a quandary.

Having bought 131 shops of flooded by Ladbroke's for £47 million (as part of an exercise to circumvent the intervention of the Office of Fair Trading), Tote plans are now on hold awaiting the decision of the MMC which could take six months.

If the Commission decides that the Ladbroke's deal, which would give them over 30 per cent of the betting market, is unfair more of their shops would need to be sold off.

Referring to this possibility, John Heaton, chief executive of the Tote said: "We have the bottle to be as big as we can. But whether we could put together the money to buy more shops is the key - finance is the restraint."

The big race on Saturday is the Sunderland Imperial Cup at Sandown in which Martin Pipe's Blowing Wind is a 1-1 favourite with Coral followed by 8-1 Nardance Prince, Alahang and 10-1 Nardawall.

Prospects for tomorrow's meeting at Carlisle have deteriorated. The course has been waterlogged after heavy rain and snow and there will be an inspection at 4.30 this afternoon.

Time to follow the Lady in form

MARY REVELEY, who had a double at Sedgefield yesterday, is in good form and can continue her winning ways with Wymondley (1.50) in the Chirk Novice Hurdle at Bangor today, writes Tony Poley.

The selection won with a little in hand at Kelso last month and is considered a good prospect by her trainer. She should have too much speed around this tight course at the mini-

mum trip for Oliver Sherwood's Kadou Nonantais. Crabbie's Pride (3.30) can follow up last week's easy Catterick win over course and distance in the Rindhy Handicap Hurdle. He was value for double his 15-length winning margin and still looks well treated under his fifth penalty.

Ann Swinbank has good prospects at Southwell with Milton (1.40), who is finally stepping up to a more suitable trip.

Bangor

1.50	2.20	2.50	3.20	4.20	4.50
Wymondley (nap)	Agnes (nap)	Agnes Express	Wymondley	Wymondley	Wymondley
Wymondley	Wymondley	Wymondley	Wymondley	Wymondley	Wymondley

Circular, left-handed track of 13m with 325yds run-in. Fairly sharp with light banks. Going: Good to soft. • Donkeys blinkers. Long distance travellers; Falkland (4.50) M Pops, Devon, 170 miles. Sown first winners: None.

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

1.50 CHURCH NOVICE HURDLE (Div 1)

2m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	115	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	127	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	127	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	127	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	127	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	127	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	127	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	127	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	127	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	127	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

2.20 CHURCH NOVICE HURDLE (Div 2)

2m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

2.50 CHURCH NOVICE HURDLE

2m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

3.20 WYMONDLEY LVA NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE

3m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

3.50 HOLYWELL HANDICAP CHASE

3m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

4.20 HUNTER PEEL CHALLENGE TROPHY HUNTERS' CHASE

3m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

4.50 SANDY LAKE NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE

2m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F, Flat.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockey	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Wymondley	26	31	28	25	22	19	16	13	10	7
Wymondley	26	31	28	25	22	19	16	13	10	7
Wymondley	26	31	28	25	22	19	16	13	10	7
Wymondley	26	31	28	25	22	19	16	13	10	7
Wymondley	26	31	28	25	22	19	16	13	10	7
Wymondley	26	31	28	25	22	19	16	13	10	7
Wymondley	26	31	28	25	22	19	16	13	10	7
Wymondley	26	31	28	25	22	19	16	13	10	7
Wymondley	26	31	28	25	22	19	16	13	10	7
Wymondley	26	31	28	25	22	19	16	13	10	7



Centre of attention... Steffi Graf on the way to a third-round victory over Japan's Ai Sngiyama in California yesterday

Graf chief attraction at Indian Wells

STEFFI GRAF and her successor as world No. 1, Martina Hingis, both cruised into the quarter-finals of the hardcourt Indian Wells, California.

Graf, seeded only 43 minutes, ousted the 11th-seeded Ai Sngiyama of Japan, dropping only one game in a 6-0, 6-1 third-round win late on Monday night, while Hingis annihilated Germany's Melke Bahel

6-2, 6-0 in 51 minutes. "I had so much fun," said the 17-year-old Hingis. "I'm fine with Steffi getting so much attention."

The Swiss teenager has found herself playing to less than full houses while fans flock to watch the 28-year-old German, who returned only recently after nine months' absence following knee surgery.

"I still have room for improvement but I anticipated the ball very well

tonight," said Graf, winner of 21 Grand Slam singles titles. "In the last few weeks the knee has been solid." She now meets Natasha Zvereva of Belarus.

Hingis faces the winner of a match between the Russian teenager Anna Kournikova and fifth-seeded Spaniard Conchita Martinez.

In the ATP Champions Cup event, also at Indian Wells, Andre Agassi came straight from winning his second title of the year at

Scottsdale on Sunday and declining the offer of a later start, beat Todd Woodbridge of Australia in the first round 7-6, 6-4.

Woodbridge, whose doubles accomplishments far exceed his singles prowess, kept pace with the American for most of the match. In the first set he slipped up only in the tie-break, giving Agassi a set point at 6-3 with an untimely double fault.

"It wasn't about me

showing up here and playing great," said Agassi, whose relentless progress back on the rankings has now taken him to No. 40 from No. 122 at the start of the year. "It was about me showing up and getting the job done."

Austria's Thomas Muster, another former world No. 1, unseeded in this tournament, also moved safely into the second round with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over the American Chris Woodruff.

Catterick Jackpot card with guide to the form

2.00 FOREHAY HANDICAP

2m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

2.00 HORNBY NOVICE HURDLE

2m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

3.00 PETER VAUX MEMORIAL TROPHY NOVICE CHASE

2m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

4.00 BABY NOVICE HUNTERS' CHASE

2m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

5.00 BUENITESS INTERMEDIATE OPEN NATIONAL

2m 11f 22.285 (10 declared)

1	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
2	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
3	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
4	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
5	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
6	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
7	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
8	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
9	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)
10	141	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)	Wymondley (nap)

14 SPORTS NEWS

Football

FA takes up the cudgels in Collymore row

Ian Ross

THE Football Association underlined its determination to rid the English game of racism yesterday by announcing its own inquiry into the public row between Stan Collymore and Steve Harkness.

The intervention was wholly unexpected, coming as it did without a formal complaint and less than 24 hours after the two players had seemingly ended the tawdry saga by calling an uneasy truce.

Collymore and Harkness had spent more than four hours at the Manchester headquarters of the Professional Footballers' Association on Monday afternoon, seeking the formula for a meaningful reconciliation.

The former Liverpool teammates had been at loggerheads for almost a week after Collymore, the Aston Villa striker, claimed that Harkness, the Liverpool defender, called him a "coon" during the Premiership match at Villa Park on February 28.

But, with Harkness adamant that he would not apologise for something he insists never happened and Colly-

more refusing to withdraw his accusation, the PFA's attempt to broker a solution essentially failed.

The admission by the PFA's chief executive Gordon Taylor that the two men had been unable to settle their differences and were "not hosing huddles" prompted belated action by the FA.

"We wanted to give the PFA a clear run at things first," said the FA's press officer Steve Double. "Clearly the matter has yet to be fully resolved."

"This is a most serious matter and I must stress that we fully intend to get to the bottom of it."

The FA has now written to both players, and their clubs, seeking their observations. Once it has statements and documentary evidence, it will deliberate before announcing its verdict. But, with Collymore and Harkness allowed 14 days to respond, the affair is unlikely to be concluded before the middle of next month.

"We simply will not stand for any form of racism within football in this country," said Double. "We fully intend to root it out once and for all. It is a very difficult issue to tackle head-on but we intend to try and do just that."

"It was never a question of the Football Association ignoring this particular matter; we just wanted to wait and see how things progressed before taking action of our own."

Collymore said on Sky yesterday that he had no regrets about bringing the issue into the spotlight. "I can walk out with my head held up high," he said.

Villa's manager John Gregory commended his striker for his stand and said: "We wanted, at the football club, more than anything to push this issue home. There were times when it might have crossed his mind to drop the whole idea but we really encouraged him to forge ahead with it and really get to the bottom of it. I was very proud of him and the way he handled the whole thing."

The FA is investigating another case of alleged racism involving the Scarborough goalkeeper Andy Rhodes. Cambridgeshire Police have forwarded witness statements from supporters alleging that Rhodes made racist remarks to the Cambridge United player Trevor Benjamin during a Third Division match at the Abbey Stadium on January 10.



Challenging times... Sunderland's Darren Williams won this confrontation with the grounded Peter Ndlovu last night

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROSS KINNAIRD

First Division: Sunderland 1 Birmingham City 1

Johnston strikes just in time

George Caulkin

THE bizarre new trend of First Division managers handing in their notices before important games again paid surprising dividends last night as Birmingham City followed the example of Sheffield United to claim a thoroughly deserved, if unexpected, draw at the Stadium of Light.

For Trevor Francis, reinstated at Birmingham's helm for little more than 24 hours, this was a personal triumph and one that could have been bettered only if Sunderland's Allan Johnston had not turned in a flick by Alex Rae in the last minute.

Francis's energetic teaming in the Nationwide structure could take credit for going so close to inflicting Sunder-

land's first home defeat since September. At least they denied Peter Reid's side the opportunity of overhauling Nottingham Forest at the top.

With the power base of Francis seemingly broadened, his team made their first visit to the Stadium of Light in the knowledge that anything better than a goalless draw would propel them into a play-off berth.

Sunderland needed victory, but the cause was hindered, considerably before kick-off, by the news that Niall Quinn was not fit enough to begin the match, the Republic of Ireland striker having twisted an ankle in a scoring hat-trick against Stockport on Saturday.

For one headline in came another, Daniele Dichiò making his first start since sign-

ing from Sampdoria for £800,000 in January.

Initially the effect was far from seamless. Less than five minutes was on the board when a deep Michael Gray centre was neatly cushioned by Kevin Phillips and Dichiò, standing alone in the area, conspicuously failed to make contact with the ball.

It was a glaring, embarrassing mistake and one which really ought to have been punished eight minutes later, but Birmingham's captain Steve Bruce was equally awry with a point-blank header from Jon McCarthy's inswinging corner.

Birmingham were the more impressive in a disjointed first half, even if their task was made all the more straightforward by Sunderland's alarming tendency to

give the ball away cheaply.

The danger of such carelessness was graphically illustrated by Peter Ndlovu, who claimed an aimless pass by Jody Craddock, steamed into the 18-yard box and shot fractionally wide of the left-hand post.

Reid's side could certainly hold few complaints about reaching the break with no alteration to the scoreline, even if another substantial crowd could not say the same. After Dichiò's early mishap, Sunderland failed miserably to come to terms with Birmingham's obvious appetite for the challenge, although a tame shot from Alex Rae which trundled invitingly to Ian Bennett was their only other noteworthy goal attempt.

For Sunderland, events quickly took a predictable turn for the worse. After 50 minutes, Ndlovu, an electrifying figure throughout, again took advantage of sloppy defending, stepping over a lunge by Darren Williams and crossing from the left touchline.

Martin O'Connor made a hash of the first opportunity but the ball rebounded kindly, allowing Dale Adebo to volley home his fifth goal in eight games since leaving Crewe. Dichiò's number was immediately held aloft and Quinn was thrust into the action.

Sunderland (4-4-2): Pires, Morrison, Summerville, Gamm, Craddock, Williams, Gray, Rae, Ball, Clark, Johnston, Dichiò, Quinn, St. Phillips, Birmingham City (4-4-2): Bennett, Bass, Bruce, Johnson, Chalkley, McCarthy, O'Connor, Morrison, Grant, Ndlovu, Adeola.

Referee: K. Lynch. (Journalist's report)

Fresh worry over Francis as 'boss' Brady hits back

Peter White

TREVOR FRANCIS's position as Birmingham City manager was under jeopardy last night after a bitter attack by the First Division club's managing director Karren Brady.

Brady reacted angrily to comments Francis made about her and the club's commercial department when he reversed his week-end decision to resign.

She countered: "If the manager is trying to turn it into a me-versus-him situation, then there will be only one winner - me. There is no question that I am the boss. When he came back from his resignation he did so under the same terms as before. There were no concessions."

"I am in charge of the club day to day, and of all the commercial decisions. He takes care of the football side and if he thinks he has scored any points over me, he is wrong. No one will be talking on eggshells around Trevor Francis."

Francis has a one-year roll-over contract at St Andrew's but Brady's outburst could well prompt another resignation and she has made it clear she would have no qualms about letting Francis leave.

She added: "We will have to wait and see whether I can maintain a working relationship with him. He is our manager until the end of the season, then we will probably review what is best for the club."

Brady also made it clear that if anyone is to leave St Andrew's, it will not be her.

"The board have complete faith in me and I have never been happier," she said. "I have had offers from other clubs but I do not want to leave and the board will not let me."

Meanwhile, Brady's reassurances over revolutionary proposals to give First Division clubs more autonomy have not impressed Second and Third Division chairmen, who will now attempt to come up with their own plans.

The First Division clubs want the power to negotiate the Nationwide League's next TV deal, build bridges with the Premier League, control marketing and commercial activities and virtually govern their affairs - while acting in the Nationwide structure.

England in guarded welcome to promise of extra tickets

John Duncan

THE Football Association will know at the end of this week how many extra tickets it will receive for England's first-round matches in the World Cup in France. It is expected to be hundreds rather than thousands.

"We have been presented with a figure that there are 160,000 tickets outstanding," said David Davies, the FA's

director of communications, after a two-day pre-tournament workshop in Paris for the 32 participating countries.

"The idea is that they will be distributed between the 32 competing teams but in what proportions we don't know."

England have already been allocated 2,589, 2,749 and 3,790 tickets for the games in Lens, Toulouse and Marseille respectively to be distributed among the 32,000 members of the England Travel Club.

Dalglish swoops for Dabizas but gives up on Babbel

NEWCASTLE United have signed the Greek international defender Nicos Dabizas, taking Kenny Dalglish's spending to around £12 million in the past six weeks.

The arrival of the 24-year-old Dabizas from Olympiakos for around £2 million comes after the Newcastle manager admitted defeat in his quest to attract the German international centre-half Markus Babbel.

Aston Villa have targeted the Chilean attacking midfielder Jose Luis Sierra as their first signing under their new manager John Gregory. Sierra, 28, impressed during the recent international tour of England.

Blackburn are keen to sign the England international Dion Dublin from Coventry - if the price is right. Rovers' manager Roy Hodgson wants another striker and is particularly keen on Dublin, who can play centre-half or in attack.

The Blackbourn striker Chris Sutton was yesterday voted the Carling Player of the Month for February.

Benfica's manager Graeme Souness is trying to raise the money to match Liverpool's £24 million valuation of Patrick Berger. He is in the process of

selling the Dutch winger Gaston Taument to Anderlecht for £1.5 million and has also transfer-listed the Swedish striker Martin Pringle, who would cost around £1 million.

Manchester City have snapped Leeds' veteran centre-half Richard Johnson on a free transfer. Their manager Joe Royle moved for 34-year-old Johnson when the Georgian Martaz Shella was ruled out for the season with knee damage.

Top brass from Fifa, football's world governing body, will meet Prime Minister Tony Blair today to discuss England's bid for the 2006 World Cup. Fifa's president Joao Havelange and general secretary Sepp Blatter will visit Blair at Downing Street.

"The Prime Minister will be pressing home a strong case for the cup," said an FA spokesman.

Things go from bad to worse for Doncaster - 12 points adrift at the foot of the Third Division. Their striker Paul Wilson, hailed as the man whose goals would save the club from the Vauxhall Conference after he joined from Plymouth, has been jailed for three months for driving while disqualified.

Millwall have appointed Steve Gritt as assistant manager to Billy Bonds.

Results

Football

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

First Division
Sunderland (0) 1 Birmingham City (0) 1
Johnston 90' Adeola 50'

Second Division
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

Third Division
Derby (0) 1 Scarborough (1) 2
Rowe 54
1-29
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

Fourth Division
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

League Cup
Sheff Wed (0) 1 York (1) 2
Ramsay 52 Jones 24

Rugby League

REPRESENTATIVE: Barrie Pridmore 20
12 France 10-42
VARIETY MATCH: Cambridge Univ 24
Oxford Univ 10

Tennis
COPENHAGEN Open: First round:
M. S. (1) 6-4, 6-2; D. (2) 6-4, 7-6;
S. (3) 6-4, 6-2; K. (4) 6-4, 6-2;
J. (5) 6-4, 6-2; B. (6) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (7) 6-4, 6-2; P. (8) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (9) 6-4, 6-2; T. (10) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (11) 6-4, 6-2; I. (12) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (13) 6-4, 6-2; B. (14) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (15) 6-4, 6-2; P. (16) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (17) 6-4, 6-2; T. (18) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (19) 6-4, 6-2; I. (20) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (21) 6-4, 6-2; B. (22) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (23) 6-4, 6-2; P. (24) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (25) 6-4, 6-2; T. (26) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (27) 6-4, 6-2; I. (28) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (29) 6-4, 6-2; B. (30) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (31) 6-4, 6-2; P. (32) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (33) 6-4, 6-2; T. (34) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (35) 6-4, 6-2; I. (36) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (37) 6-4, 6-2; B. (38) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (39) 6-4, 6-2; P. (40) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (41) 6-4, 6-2; T. (42) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (43) 6-4, 6-2; I. (44) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (45) 6-4, 6-2; B. (46) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (47) 6-4, 6-2; P. (48) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (49) 6-4, 6-2; T. (50) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (51) 6-4, 6-2; I. (52) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (53) 6-4, 6-2; B. (54) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (55) 6-4, 6-2; P. (56) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (57) 6-4, 6-2; T. (58) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (59) 6-4, 6-2; I. (60) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (61) 6-4, 6-2; B. (62) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (63) 6-4, 6-2; P. (64) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (65) 6-4, 6-2; T. (66) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (67) 6-4, 6-2; I. (68) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (69) 6-4, 6-2; B. (70) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (71) 6-4, 6-2; P. (72) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (73) 6-4, 6-2; T. (74) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (75) 6-4, 6-2; I. (76) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (77) 6-4, 6-2; B. (78) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (79) 6-4, 6-2; P. (80) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (81) 6-4, 6-2; T. (82) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (83) 6-4, 6-2; I. (84) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (85) 6-4, 6-2; B. (86) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (87) 6-4, 6-2; P. (88) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (89) 6-4, 6-2; T. (90) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (91) 6-4, 6-2; I. (92) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (93) 6-4, 6-2; B. (94) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (95) 6-4, 6-2; P. (96) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (97) 6-4, 6-2; T. (98) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (99) 6-4, 6-2; I. (100) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (101) 6-4, 6-2; B. (102) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (103) 6-4, 6-2; P. (104) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (105) 6-4, 6-2; T. (106) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (107) 6-4, 6-2; I. (108) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (109) 6-4, 6-2; B. (110) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (111) 6-4, 6-2; P. (112) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (113) 6-4, 6-2; T. (114) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (115) 6-4, 6-2; I. (116) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (117) 6-4, 6-2; B. (118) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (119) 6-4, 6-2; P. (120) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (121) 6-4, 6-2; T. (122) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (123) 6-4, 6-2; I. (124) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (125) 6-4, 6-2; B. (126) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (127) 6-4, 6-2; P. (128) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (129) 6-4, 6-2; T. (130) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (131) 6-4, 6-2; I. (132) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (133) 6-4, 6-2; B. (134) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (135) 6-4, 6-2; P. (136) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (137) 6-4, 6-2; T. (138) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (139) 6-4, 6-2; I. (140) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (141) 6-4, 6-2; B. (142) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (143) 6-4, 6-2; P. (144) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (145) 6-4, 6-2; T. (146) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (147) 6-4, 6-2; I. (148) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (149) 6-4, 6-2; B. (150) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (151) 6-4, 6-2; P. (152) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (153) 6-4, 6-2; T. (154) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (155) 6-4, 6-2; I. (156) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (157) 6-4, 6-2; B. (158) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (159) 6-4, 6-2; P. (160) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (161) 6-4, 6-2; T. (162) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (163) 6-4, 6-2; I. (164) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (165) 6-4, 6-2; B. (166) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (167) 6-4, 6-2; P. (168) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (169) 6-4, 6-2; T. (170) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (171) 6-4, 6-2; I. (172) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (173) 6-4, 6-2; B. (174) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (175) 6-4, 6-2; P. (176) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (177) 6-4, 6-2; T. (178) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (179) 6-4, 6-2; I. (180) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (181) 6-4, 6-2; B. (182) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (183) 6-4, 6-2; P. (184) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (185) 6-4, 6-2; T. (186) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (187) 6-4, 6-2; I. (188) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (189) 6-4, 6-2; B. (190) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (191) 6-4, 6-2; P. (192) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (193) 6-4, 6-2; T. (194) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (195) 6-4, 6-2; I. (196) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (197) 6-4, 6-2; B. (198) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (199) 6-4, 6-2; P. (200) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (201) 6-4, 6-2; T. (202) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (203) 6-4, 6-2; I. (204) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (205) 6-4, 6-2; B. (206) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (207) 6-4, 6-2; P. (208) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (209) 6-4, 6-2; T. (210) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (211) 6-4, 6-2; I. (212) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (213) 6-4, 6-2; B. (214) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (215) 6-4, 6-2; P. (216) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (217) 6-4, 6-2; T. (218) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (219) 6-4, 6-2; I. (220) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (221) 6-4, 6-2; B. (222) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (223) 6-4, 6-2; P. (224) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (225) 6-4, 6-2; T. (226) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (227) 6-4, 6-2; I. (228) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (229) 6-4, 6-2; B. (230) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (231) 6-4, 6-2; P. (232) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (233) 6-4, 6-2; T. (234) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (235) 6-4, 6-2; I. (236) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (237) 6-4, 6-2; B. (238) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (239) 6-4, 6-2; P. (240) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (241) 6-4, 6-2; T. (242) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (243) 6-4, 6-2; I. (244) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (245) 6-4, 6-2; B. (246) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (247) 6-4, 6-2; P. (248) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (249) 6-4, 6-2; T. (250) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (251) 6-4, 6-2; I. (252) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (253) 6-4, 6-2; B. (254) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (255) 6-4, 6-2; P. (256) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (257) 6-4, 6-2; T. (258) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (259) 6-4, 6-2; I. (260) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (261) 6-4, 6-2; B. (262) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (263) 6-4, 6-2; P. (264) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (265) 6-4, 6-2; T. (266) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (267) 6-4, 6-2; I. (268) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (269) 6-4, 6-2; B. (270) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (271) 6-4, 6-2; P. (272) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (273) 6-4, 6-2; T. (274) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (275) 6-4, 6-2; I. (276) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (277) 6-4, 6-2; B. (278) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (279) 6-4, 6-2; P. (280) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (281) 6-4, 6-2; T. (282) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (283) 6-4, 6-2; I. (284) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (285) 6-4, 6-2; B. (286) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (287) 6-4, 6-2; P. (288) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (289) 6-4, 6-2; T. (290) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (291) 6-4, 6-2; I. (292) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (293) 6-4, 6-2; B. (294) 6-4, 6-2;
L. (295) 6-4, 6-2; P. (296) 6-4, 6-2;
R. (297) 6-4, 6-2; T. (298) 6-4, 6-2;
N. (299) 6-4, 6-2; I. (300) 6-4, 6-2;
S. (301) 6-4, 6-2; B. (302) 6

SportsGuardian

Venables is key to Gazza's Palace

Martin Thorpe

RANGERS have agreed to sell Paul Gascoigne to Crystal Palace but the England midfielder has still to decide if he wants to move to Selhurst Park.

The transfer, for a £3 million fee plus cash based on appearances, is not dependent from Palace's point of view on Terry Venables agreeing to become manager. But it may be for Gazza, given the 30-year-old's fruitful association with the former England and Tottenham coach.

The player probably has one lucrative move left and is keen to make the right choice. He will listen to Palace's prospective owner Mark Goldberg detail his five-year plan to turn the club into a major European force when the pair hold talks early next week.

However, few managers can handle the troublesome Gascoigne and Goldberg will be taking a big gamble signing him if Venables is not there to apply his guiding hand.

That will not be decided until next Tuesday after Goldberg yesterday agreed to give Venables more time to consider his £750,000-a-year offer to become Palace's manager.

Venables is still thinking over other coaching offers from Italy and Spain, including informal approaches from Real Madrid and Deportivo La Coruña. "We would like a decision but at the same time I do not want to rush him and end up with him saying no," said Goldberg. "But we feel we're becoming more comfortable with each other at every meeting."

"One has to take on board Crystal Palace are bottom of the Premiership and Terry Venables doesn't know Mark Goldberg from anybody."

Gascoigne's lawyer Mel Stein said his client would not consider a transfer until he has got over an ankle and calf injury in about a week. "All that's happened is that Palace had some discussions with Rangers," he said. "They may well have agreed a price in principle, but certainly Paul hasn't agreed to anything whatsoever."

Although Gascoigne has shown an interest in finishing his career in the United States, he may be tempted to return to London, where he spends a lot of his time anyway, to be close to his son Regan, by his estranged wife Sheryl, and his friends.

After a season in which Gascoigne has been in and out of the Rangers side with injuries, he now finds himself surplus to requirements at Ibrox. In the summer a new manager, Dick Advocaat, takes over with plans to build his own team without the ageing and increasingly unreliable Gazza.

Goldberg said: "I would not sign Paul without first consulting Terry, the chairman Ron Noades and Steve Coppell [but] I believe Venables and Gascoigne would be inspirational. At this stage, I think that's exactly what we need."

But Goldberg has already started considering his options should Venables reject the club he managed from 1976 to 1980. The computer millionaire met Newcastle's John Barnes on Monday night.

Australian defeat gets tempers hot in Madras



Beg to differ, old chap... or words to that effect as Australia's Ricky Ponting pauses for a quiet word with the umpire George Sharp after failing to survive an optimistic lbw appeal by India's Venkatapathy Raju. PHOTOGRAPH BY BEN RADFORD

Sharp decisions go against Waughs

THE English umpire George Sharp, right, was at the centre of controversy in Madras yesterday when Australia crashed to a 179-run defeat by India in the first Test.

Resuming at 31 for three, the tourists were 96 for seven by lunch after three debatable Sharp decisions. He gave Paul Reiffel out caught when replay showed the ball had hit his boot; Ricky Ponting was lbw to Raju to a ball seemingly pitched outside leg stump; Steve Waugh, whose brother Mark also got a dubious call, was caught off a ball that looked to hit boot.

David Hoppe, page 15



Dastardly stains on the tacky races



Paul Hayward

IT MAY be a coincidence that the BBC started re-showing Wacky Races as the new Formula One season was about to get under way. And we all know who Dick Dastardly is. He's the one who tries to run the others off the track. Presumably Michael Schumacher has a dog at home called Muttley.

Far more dubious than the fixing of the Australian Grand Prix result was Schumacher's presence on the grid in the devil-red Ferrari. Choreography and team tactics have always been part of F1. The more sinister aspect of Sunday's race was that Schumacher was allowed to compete after trying to ram Jacques Villeneuve off the track at Jerez last year.

Muttley would have let out one of his finest Machiavellian sniggers when his master was told he could race on unpunished.

The outrage that greeted Mika Hakkinen's contrived victory was flawed in one vital respect. Everyone has known for years that teams arrange finishing orders between themselves. David Coulthard's supposedly Corinthian gesture in allowing his team-mate to win was merely a graphically confirmed act of sleazy expediency.

Schumacher's team-mate Eddie Irvine has written into his contract that Schumacher has the right to pass him if there is ever a question of one or other of the Ferraris winning a race.

As punters tore up their slips the Australian media busied itself with questioning the integrity of a sport that fixes results over the pre-race pasta. Most of us would probably agree that, whatever the pit-lane tradition, such horse-trading erodes the myth of F1 as a death-defying race to the wire.

It is neither solely a sport nor a business, but a Faustian pact between the two. It is a death-game sanitised for pay-per-view, an heroic 20th-century struggle of man against machine with a mostly fake playboy aura that conceals the boring hard work that's done to cook the trigger of the cars. At its core, which you can reach only with a hundred laminated passes,

clothes by Hugo Boss and an ability to talk through more than one orifice, it is still a mind-rattlingly thrilling exposition of human ingenuity.

It's both wonderful and dreadful, like most sports. It enshrines the whole kid-choking car culture and celebrates pointless speed, but it also, as all great sports do, enables people to find out things about themselves, to conquer mental and physical problems that would turn most of us into sipping wrecks. But business is certainly winning over sport, and quickly. Often, now, watching a grand prix is like watching a big athletics meeting. You don't know what or who to believe in that F1 drivers compete not as individuals but as a team, that Coulthard making way for Hakkinen was no worse than Teddy Sheringham sliding a pass across to Andy Cole in front of an open goal.

They're wrong, of course, because secret pit-lane strategies can be the difference. It was not just betting-shop punters — who ought to be less trusting — who experienced that hollow sense of being duped.

There was something touchingly childish about the pre-race agreement that said whichever McLaren driver made it to the first bend first would be allowed to win. It was a bit like a married couple buying a lottery ticket and agreeing that the first one through the front door could run off with the winnings.

Coulthard was reportedly furious at being told to allow Hakkinen to pass in Jerez last autumn but was serenely himself in Melbourne. This makes you suspect that the real deal struck down in the McLaren garage has yet to seep out.

THE McLaren is obviously so superior to the rest of the pack that barring accidents the result of the Brazilian Grand Prix in a fortnight is already known. Coulthard travels to Interlagos with an almighty IOU in his back pocket and a chance to cash in on his own munificence in Melbourne. Fancy spending an hour and a half watching that?

Still, it would take a bold man to lean into an F1 cockpit and say: "Of course, you know it's not really a sport. You're a player in an elaborate video-game, mate. This is the advertising industry, not sport." The car would roar off and, whatever the pit-lane deal, the driver would still be in acute peril. That much, we assume, will never change.

In the time it takes to read this ad, someone will be burgled.

We make no apologies for alarming you.

Home Contents Insurance from Barclays now comes with a very special offer.

We'll install a state-of-the-art detection system in your home, complete with infra-red sensors, flashing lights — and an ear splitting sound system to greet anyone unwise enough to test it.

The cost of this British Standards approved system is just £5 a month over 5 years (£100 in total). And, with this added protection, you could earn an extra discount on top of our highly competitive premiums.

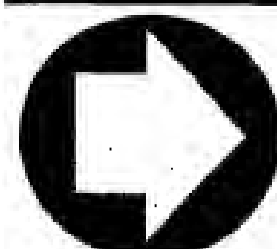
CALL 0800 15 16 17 TODAY.



BARCLAYS

BARCLAYS INSURANCE SERVICES
Independent Insurance Intermediary

Barclays Insurance Services Company Limited, Registered in England, Reg. No. 073765. Registered Office: 54 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3AH.
*60 monthly payments of £3 including £300 APR 0%. Subject to terms. To maintain a high quality service we may monitor or record phone calls.
Written quotations from Barclays Insurance Services Company Limited, 5 Bedford Park, Croydon CR9 2JL.

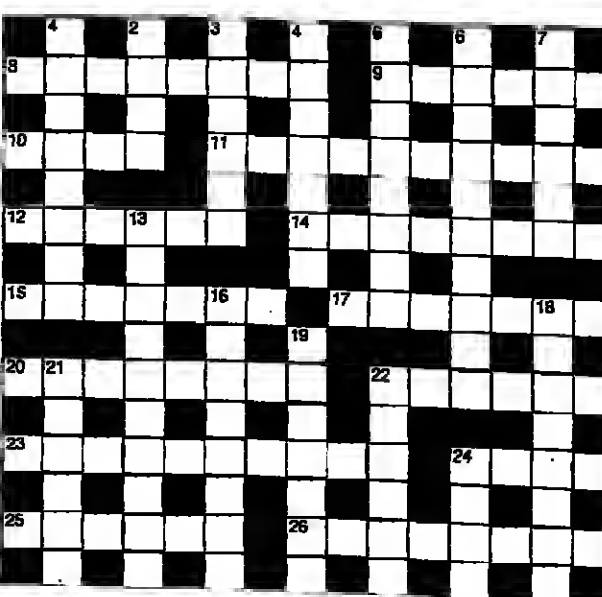


I see no harm in torturing a few royals now and again, pour encourager les autres. But there's nothing to be gained from persecuting the Windsors if those issues so carefully avoided by Labour leaders remain submerged beneath a lot of twaddle. When's world

G2 p5

Guardian Crossword No 21,219

Set by Araucaria

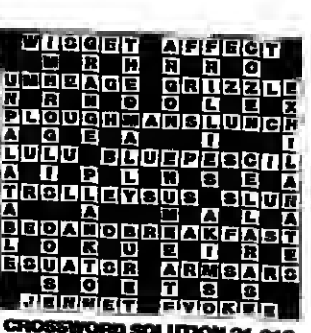


Across

- 8 Solver, stressed out, left 4, yes? (8)
9 Lots of love, the church's solution (6)
10 Hawthorn's piece? (4)
11 Lawbreaker transported away, one with others ready to walk (10)
12, 23, 19 Bill for 18s from Harlech godfather: I get big under Cardigan (6, 2, 3, 5, 7)
14 "Honour the 12...": lunatic among the solvers (4, 4)
15, 22 Across, 4 "10 a 33 times 7...": 24 down the 6 17": let heavenly food that I cooked go where it may be needed later? (4, 3, 6, 2, 5)
17 C district (7)
20 Not out to old grass (6)

Down

- 22 See 15
23 See 12
24 12 at speed? (4)
25 All round ball thrower (5)
26 The 6 17's was to note with stamp (2, 3, 3)
1 Boy (King's son), girl (empress), boy (prophet) (3)
2 Count on court? (4)
3 Compact tables (6)
4 See 15
5 Diver with a point in his knife (6)
6 Show heroism? It's good taking a male editor in (4, 1, 5)
7 Where's sister going? (6)
13 Bereft child loses right in red island to red pigment (10)
16 Where the Dutch have me for student (6)

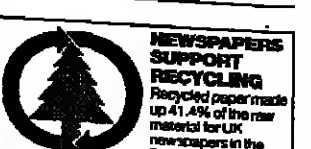


CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,219

- 18 Vote for most of the moneyed, giving one a thrill (8)
19 See 12
21 What the 6 17 felt? Certainly not! (2, 4)
22 Tax collector opposed to the divine in 8 (6)
24 13's island, say, was transported (4)

Solution tomorrow

23 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 333 236. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ATS.



March 12

Waving Bank go

Well-school fail to deliver

ticket box

side

This Sun than you